

# *Learn to Play Golf*

GRIPPING & SWINGING THE CLUB  
"HOW TO" FOR LOWER SCORES  
ETIQUETTE OF THE GAME

By

Richard Aultman  
and the Editors of Golf Digest

FULLY ILLUSTRATED



295

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Play Golf*



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Rizal Avenue • Recto Avenue • Araneta Coliseum, Cubao

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## *Why Golf?*

IN CALIFORNIA Henry De Vries plays at least 18 holes of golf five days a week. When he isn't on the course, he's at home studying books and magazines on golf or watching the game played on television. He's always seeking ways to become a better player. His drive to improve his game is no less intense than that of the most avid beginner, yet Mr. De Vries is 92 years old, and he plays golf on an artificial leg.

Mr. De Vries learned to love golf late in life. He didn't take up the sport until he had retired from business at age 62, but the game has given him over three decades of healthy enjoyment and friendly companionship in the fresh outdoors.

Golf could become an important part of your life for an even longer period of time. It is truly a game for all ages. If you can walk and sweep a broom, you can play golf.

One appealing feature of golf is that you can play it either by yourself or with friends. Playing alone you face the challenge of the course, with its many hazards, and whatever standards of excellence you set for yourself. Playing with others you experience both leisurely companionship and fierce competition. And you probably will find a round of golf to be all-consuming. It demands your utmost concentration. You can be thinking about nothing else—not business problems or everyday worries—and the result is complete escape from your cares. Often, when you return to your normal routine after a round of golf you will find yourself revitalized, with a fresh perspective on life.



As a general rule, golf is easier to learn when you are young. Young people have greater physical flexibility and, according to many experts, the ability to better imitate physical action than do their elders. You can hardly take up the game too soon—Arnold Palmer was swinging a club when he was 5, for example. You may not be the next Arnold Palmer, but an early start for you or your children is desirable. Mature beginners will find the game somewhat more challenging, but no less rewarding or enjoyable.

Today golf is more than ever before a readily accessible game. There are some 9,000 regulation 9- and 18-hole courses in this country, plus about 850 par-3 courses and a burgeoning number of driving ranges and practice areas, with many more being built. In recent years the most remarkable trend in golf has been its evolution from its role as a plaything of the very rich to a game that anyone can play. More people have more leisure time than at any period in history, and many of them are turning to golf for recreation.

The game itself dates back, according to reliable evidence, at least as far as 1413, in St. Andrews, Scotland. In 1457 the king of Scotland prohibited the playing of golf, warning his subjects to confine themselves to the more utilitarian pastime of archery, but the ban didn't last. By 1503 even the king could be found on the golf course.

Down through the centuries the game has continued to be played by king and commoner alike until it has become one of the most popular recreational pastimes in the world.

## CHAPTER TWO

### *Glossary*

GOLF, LIKE MOST PURSUITS, has a vocabulary of its own. This glossary of golf terms is presented here, at the beginning of the book, in order to help you understand the instructions in the following chapters.

**ACE.** Playing hole in one stroke; also known as a hole-in-one.

**ADDRESS.** Player's position before hitting ball.

**AMATEUR.** Someone who plays golf as a sport, without compensation.

**APPROACH.** Shot to the green; also area in front of green.

**APRON.** Area immediately surrounding green; the grass here is usually cut shorter than on the fairway, but not as short as on green.

**AWAY.** Ball farthest from hole and next to be played. This determines order of play during each hole. After teeing off, player whose ball is farthest from hole hits his second shot first, followed by next closest player, and so on. This order also applies to play on green.

**BACK DOOR.** Describes a putted ball which rolls around cup and falls in from rear.

**BACK NINE.** Second nine holes of 18-hole course.



**BACKSPIN.** Reverse spin imparted upon ball when struck which causes it to stop quickly after landing.

**BANANA BALL.** Shot that curves wildly from left to right (for right-handed golfer); also called "slice."

**BIRDIE.** One stroke under par on a hole.

**BITE.** Same as "backspin."

**BLADE.** Putter with a thin head.

**BLAST.** See "Explosion."

**BLIND HOLE.** One on which the hole or green cannot be seen when making a normal approach shot.

**BOGEY.** One stroke over par on a hole.

**BORROW.** The distance a putt will travel sideways on a slanted green.

**BREAK.** Same as "borrow."

**BUNKER.** See "Sand Bunker."

**BYE.** Advancing in a match play tournament without having had to compete.

**CADDIE.** Someone who carries player's bag and sometimes gives advice.

**CAR.** Electric- or gasoline-powered vehicle which transports golfers and their bags; sometimes called "golf car."

**CART.** Hand-drawn bag carrier.

**CASUAL WATER.** Any temporary accumulation of water not regarded as a water hazard.

**CHIP SHOT.** Short approach shot made from close to green, usually with a low trajectory.

**CLOSE LIE.** When ball lies close to the ground and is cupped by surrounding grass.

**CLOSED.** Clubface position pointing to left of target (for right-handed golfers).

**CLOSED STANCE.** Address position in which right foot is withdrawn farther than front foot from target line.

**CLUBBING.** Advising a player what club to use for a shot.

**COLLAR.** The grass around edges of a hazard or green.

**CUP.** Metal or plastic lining fitted into hole; also hole itself.

**CUT SHOT.** Stroke giving ball a clockwise spin which causes it to curve slightly to the right and settle quickly.

**DIVOT.** Turf cut by clubhead during swing.

**DOGLEG.** Hole where fairway bends to the left or right.

**DORMIE.** Situation in match play in which a player or team is as many holes ahead as there are holes remaining.

**DOUBLE BOGEY.** Two strokes over par on a hole.

**DRAW.** Shot which curves left, but less drastically than a hook.

**DRIVE.** First shot on a hole, usually made off wooden tee.

**DRIVER.** Longest and least-lofted club with wooden head; used to hit ball from tee on longer holes.

**DUB.** Bad shot; also a poor golfer.

**DUCK HOOK.** Shot which nosedives and curves quickly from right to left (for right-handed golfers).

**DUFFER.** Poor player, hacker, dub.

**EAGLE.** Two strokes under par on a hole.

**EXPLOSION.** Shot from a sand bunker in which clubhead slides under the ball and through the sand, "exploding" the ball into the air.

**FAIRWAY.** Mowed area between the tee and green.



**FEATHER SHOT.** An intentionally high shot that curves gently from left to right and stops quickly upon landing.

**FLAGSTICK.** Pole that is positioned in the hole on every green, holding a flag which usually gives the number of the hole; also called "pin."

**FOLLOW-THROUGH.** That part of the swing from impact to finish.

**FORE.** Warning cry to all persons in danger of being hit by a shot.

**FOURSOME.** Match in which two partners play against another team of two, with each team playing one ball; also, common term for four players playing in a group.

**FRINGE.** See "Apron."

**FROG-HAIR.** Short grass bordering a green.

**FRONT NINE.** First nine holes of 18-hole course.

**GIMME.** Putt that is conceded to opponent.

**GRAIN.** Direction in which flat-lying grass grows on a green.

**GROSS.** Actual score on a hole or round, determined by counting all strokes before subtracting handicap.

**HANDICAP.** A computation of course rating and the golfer's previous scores, intended to allow players of unequal ability to play together on an equal basis.

**HANGING LIE.** A ball which lies on a severe down-slope.

**HAZARD.** A lake, stream, or sand trap.

**HIGH SIDE.** Area above hole on a sloping green.

**HOLE HIGH.** Ball coming to rest even with the hole, but off to one side.

**HOLE OUT.** To finish putting.

**HONOR.** Right to drive first, earned by scoring lowest in group on the previous untied hole.

**HOOD.** To position the hands ahead of ball at address, reducing the effective loft of clubface.

**HOOK.** Shot that curves from right to left for a right-handed golfer.

**IRONS.** Generally all clubs in bag with iron (steel) heads, except the putter.

**LAG.** Putting with intention of getting close to the hole rather than holing out.

**LIE.** Position of ball on the course; also, the angle formed by shaft and head of golf club.

**LINKS.** Golf course; formerly referred to seaside course.

**LIP.** Rim of the cup.

**LOFT.** Backward slant of face of golf club; also, to cause ball to rise sharply into the air.

**LOW SIDE.** Area below the hole on a slanted area of green.

**MATCH PLAY.** Competition based on number of holes won or lost, rather than on number of strokes.

**MULLIGAN.** An illegal second attempt at the same shot, usually played from first tee.

**NASSAU.** Betting competition in which three points are given—one for winning first nine holes, one for winning second nine, and one for entire 18.

**NET.** Final score after handicap is deducted.

**OPEN STANCE.** Address position in which left foot is withdrawn from intended line of flight.

**OUT OF BOUNDS.** Indicated area outside of the course proper. A shot made to this area calls for a penalty of stroke and loss of distance.



**PAR.** Score an expert would be expected to make on a hole, including two putts on the green.

**PITCH SHOT.** Shot made with a highly lofted club, making ball settle quickly on the green.

**PLAY THROUGH.** To pass a slower golfing group.

**PREFERRED LIES.** See "Winter Rules."

**PROVISIONAL BALL.** A second ball which is played when the first is lost or out of bounds.

**PULL.** Shot which travels straight but to the left of intended line.

**PUNCH SHOT.** Low shot, usually made into the wind, with an abbreviated swing and with hands well forward at address.

**PUSH.** A shot which travels straight but to the right of intended line.

**PUTT.** Stroke made on the green.

**PUTTER.** Club used to hit ball on green; many variations in style of this club are allowed.

**PUTTING GREEN.** Closely cut area around the hole.

**RIM.** Putt that rolls around the edge, or "rim," of hole without falling in.

**ROUGH.** Unkept area not a part of fairway.

**RUB OF THE GREEN.** Shot which is stopped or deflected by an outside agency.

**SAND BUNKER.** Commonly called sand trap; a depression containing sand.

**SCRATCH PLAYER.** Player with a zero handicap.

**SCUFF.** To strike the ground behind the ball.

**SHANK.** Shot made with the neck of the club, sending ball sharply to the right.

**SKULL.** Mis-hit shot in which leading edge of iron club strikes ball above its center.

**SLICE.** Shot with clockwise spin which causes ball to curve sharply to the right (to left for left-handers).

**SQUARE STANCE.** Address position with both feet placed equally distant from intended line of flight.

**STONY.** Shot hit close to the pin; also called "stiff."

**STROKE PLAY.** Competition in which number of strokes taken for full round determines winner.

**TEE.** Wooden peg on which ball may be placed prior to first shot on a hole; also area for making this shot.

**TEE OFF.** First shot on each hole, usually with driver, with ball "teed up," or placed on tee.

**TEXAS WEDGE.** A putter when used off the green.

**TOE.** Part of clubhead farthest from clubshaft.

**TOP.** To strike the ball on its upper half.

**UNPLAYABLE LIE.** Ball coming to rest in a position or circumstances that make it impossible to hit.

**V.** Formation of thumb and forefinger of each hand when gripping club.

**WAGGLE.** Movement of the clubhead in preparing the swing.

**WEDGE (Sand and Pitching).** Two types of irons with clubfaces having high degree of loft, used for specialty shots around green and to hit ball out of bunkers or rough.

**WHIFF.** Missing ball completely.

**WINTER RULES.** Practice of permitting player to move ball to better position on fairway when course conditions are poor. Not recognized in Rules of Golf, but allowed at some clubs.

**WOODS.** Long-shafted clubs with wooden heads, used for long shots off tee and on fairway.



## Conduct of the Game

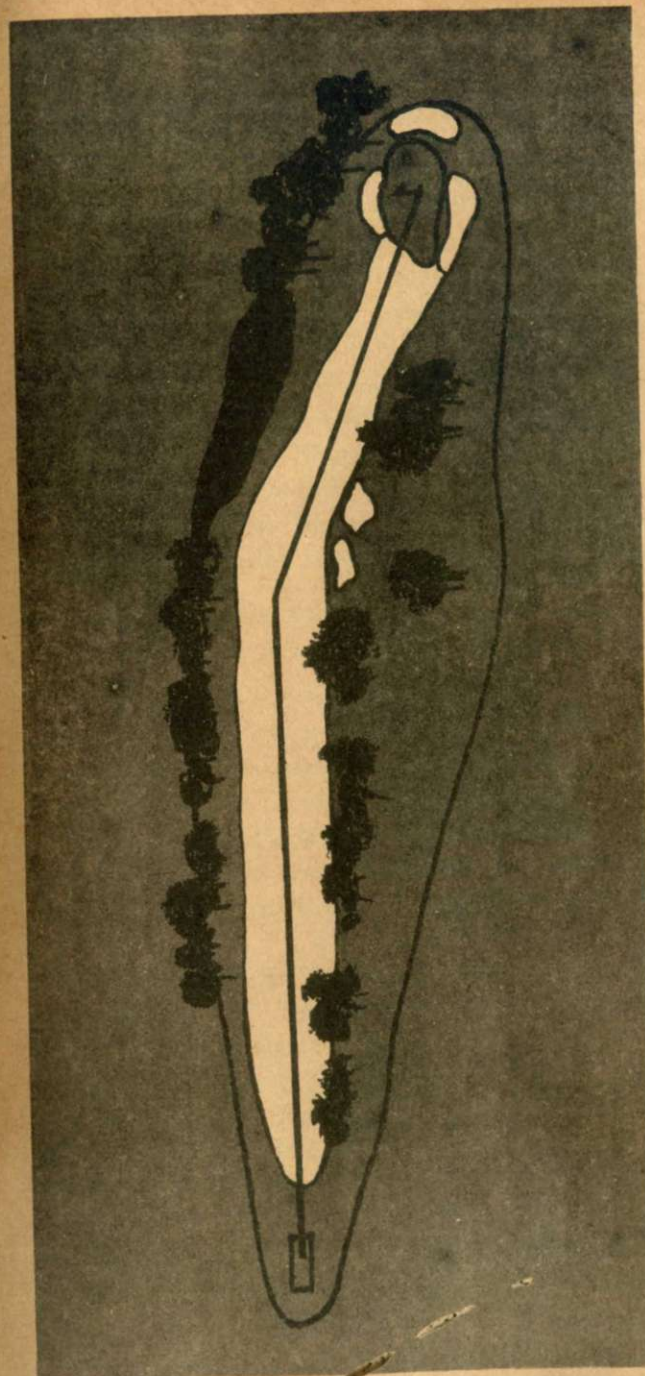
YOU ARE PROBABLY anxious to start learning how to play the game. However, before we begin discussing how to hit the ball, we must talk about the basic format of the sport and its etiquette, so you can tee up for the first time with confidence.

### THE GOLF COURSE

A regulation golf course is a large plot of land divided into 18 parts, or "holes." Each hole begins with a "teeing area" and ends with a closely cropped portion of grass known as a "green." The mowed area between the tee and the green is called the "fairway."

Because golf courses are constructed largely according to the contours and limitations of the available terrain, holes vary in length; they are usually between 100 and 600 yards from the middle of the tee to the center of the green. The total length of a course is calculated by adding the lengths of all 18 holes. Most "full length" courses total between 6,000 and 7,000 yards.

The modern trend is to build courses with very long teeing areas, a feature that allows course officials to vary the playing length of holes by placing the "tee markers" in different positions. Normally women golfers "tee off" from just behind markers placed near the front of the tee, or in some cases on a special teeing area. Men golfers will normally play from just behind markers placed near the center of the teeing



This is a typical golf hole. The teeing area is the rectangle at the left. The fairway is the large white area. The green is at the right, surrounded by sand bunkers (irregularly shaped white areas). The dark area at the top is a water hazard. The solid line from the teeing area to the green indicates a desired way to play the hole.



area. During tournaments, play may be from markers placed farther back to increase the challenge.

The first shot on every hole—known as the “tee shot”—must be played from between and behind a set of two markers on the teeing area. For this shot, and only this shot, the ball may be placed upon a wooden peg known as a tee. Thereafter, except under special conditions, the ball should not be touched until it has been struck onto the green, at which time its position may be marked with a coin or similar object so that you may lift and clean the ball. As you play with different golfers, you will find some who move the ball onto tufts of grass, usually with the head of the club, before making shots from the fairway. This practice, known as playing “winter rules,” may be allowed at some clubs when turf conditions are poor. However, winter rules are not recognized in the Rules of Golf and should be discouraged.

## SCORING

As you may already know, the sole object of golf is to move the ball from the tee to the green and into the hole, which is  $4\frac{1}{4}$  inches in diameter, in the fewest possible shots, or “strokes.” Every stroke you make at the ball counts toward your score for the hole; even if you miss the ball entirely—and such “whiffs” are common among beginners—you must count the stroke. The total number of strokes you use for 18 holes is your score for the round.

As you progress in golf, you will become well aware of a standard of excellence known as “par.” This represents the number of strokes an expert golfer should take on a hole, allowing two shots, or “putts,” on the green. Par for a hole is determined almost entirely by its length. Par-5 holes usually are longer than 470 yards for men and 400 yards for women. Par-4s are the middle-length holes—from 251 to 470 yards for men and from 211 to 400 for women. Holes that are shorter than 251 yards for men and 211 for women usually call for a par of three. Most regulation 18-hole courses have about four par-3 holes, four par-5 holes, and the rest par-4s. The total par for a full round is about 72 strokes.

When a hole is played in one stroke less than par, the golfer has made a “birdie.” Occasionally a proficient player will make an “eagle,” which is two under par on a hole. A very rare feat, indeed, is making a “double eagle”—a hole-in-one on a par-4 hole or a two on a par-5. Unfortunately a “bogey” (one over par) and a “double bogey” (two over par) are much more common.

As a beginner, don't be discouraged if you make even triple and quadruple bogeys more frequently than you make pars. Even experienced golfers are sometimes thrilled to make a par or even a bogey on a particularly difficult hole. Since par golf will be beyond your capabilities at the outset, you may find a more realistic challenge in shooting for an average of, say, five or six shots per hole.

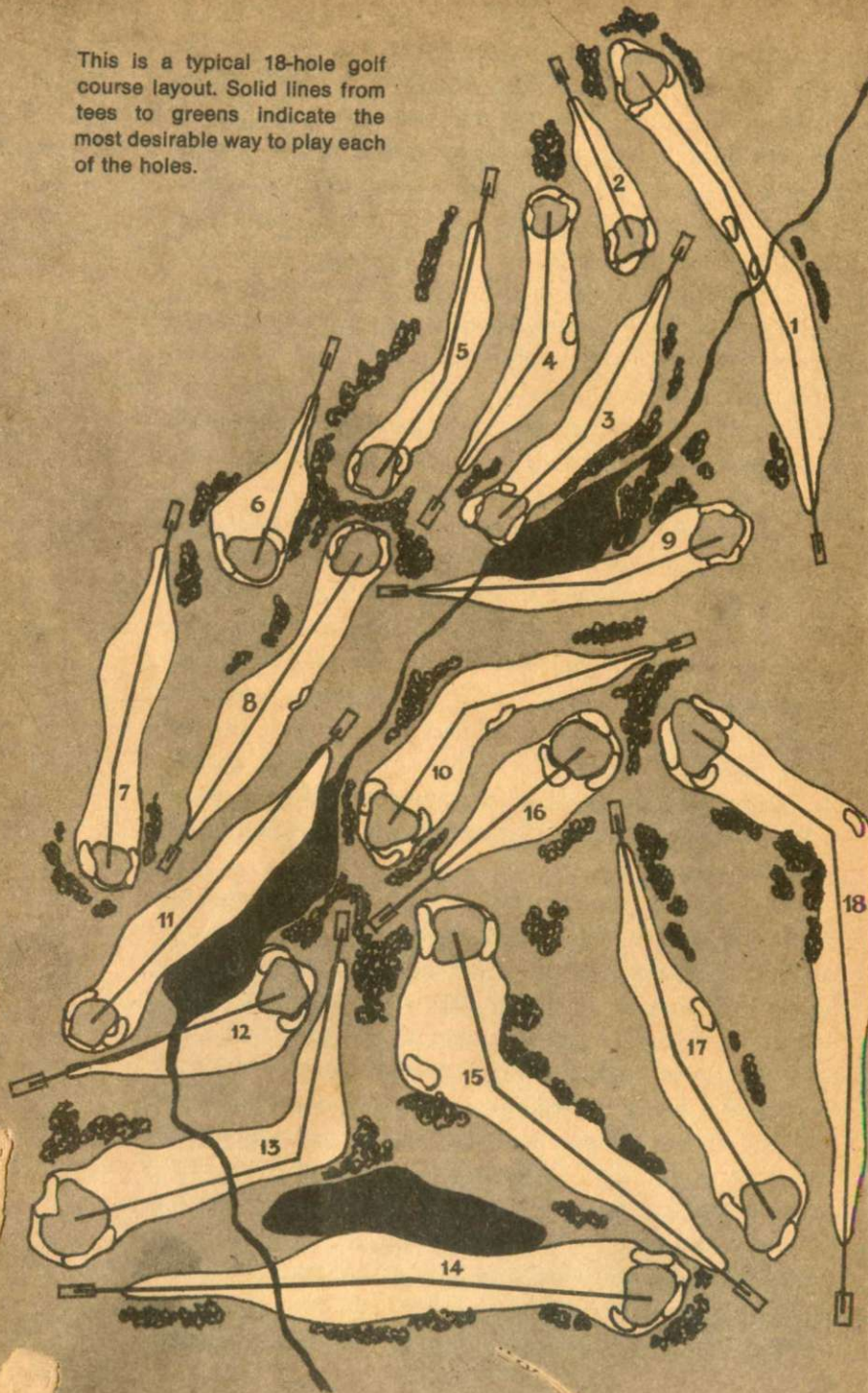
Between the tee and the green on most golf holes, you will find a number of obstacles designed to add character to the hole—if not to the golfer himself—and to make the hole more challenging. Most holes have trees and also deep grass known as “rough.” If your ball catches the rough you may not move it before shooting, even if you happen to be playing winter rules. You are also prohibited from touching the ball in “hazards,” which include water—streams, lakes, ponds, etc.—and sand. Sand hazards are commonly called “bunkers” or “traps.” Some holes are also bordered by areas designated as “out of bounds.”

Occasionally your score on a hole will be greater than the number of strokes you actually took, due to penalties, the bane of all golfers. Penalties are imposed for hitting the wrong ball, striking an unattended flagstick with a putted ball, and the like. The most common penalty situations, however, occur when your shot finishes out of bounds, your shot finishes in a water hazard and cannot be played out, your ball is lost and cannot be found within five minutes of searching, or your ball comes to rest in an “unplayable lie.”

The penalty for a ball that is out of bounds or lost is “stroke and distance.” You must add one stroke to your score and replay that shot, thus losing the distance you had originally gained. If your tee shot finished out of bounds or was lost, you would play again from the tee and this second



This is a typical 18-hole golf course layout. Solid lines from tees to greens indicate the most desirable way to play each of the holes.



try would become your third shot. When it appears that an original shot may be lost or out of bounds, you are allowed to hit a "provisional ball." If the original ball is found, the provisional ball is then removed from play.

The penalty for hitting a ball into water or an unplayable lie is only one stroke. Usually little distance is lost, because the golfer is merely required to drop the ball over his shoulder, no nearer to the hole than the spot where the ball last crossed the edge of the hazard.

After you complete play on a hole, you should enter your score on a scoreboard, available free at all courses. There are places on the card to add your subtotals for both the first and the second nine holes and your total for the full 18.

## HANDICAPPING

Once you begin playing regularly, it will be to your advantage to get and maintain a handicap, which is a computation based on the rating of the course—not its par—and the scores you shoot. It represents 85 percent of the average of the 10 lowest differentials of your last 20 rounds. If your 10 lowest scores averaged 90 and the course rating is 70, your average differential would be 20. Your handicap would be 85 percent of 20, or 17.

The purpose of handicaps is to allow players to compete on a fairly equal basis, despite differences in ability. When handicaps are involved in "stroke play" competition, they are subtracted from the 18-hole total scores and the man with the low "net" score is the winner. In "match play" competition, which is hole-by-hole with the winner being the person winning the most holes, the golfer with the higher handicap subtracts a stroke from his score on certain holes. These "stroke holes" are indicated in numerical order on the scorecard. A golfer who is being given, say, three strokes during the round would receive one stroke on each of the holes designated as 1, 2, and 3 in the handicap column on the card.

If you become a member of a private club, you will have a committee or an individual to figure your handicap periodically, often working through a computer service. This is also



true at most daily fee courses where there is a men's and women's golf association. The important thing is to turn in or post all of your scores—the good and the bad alike. With scores shot at other courses you should also post the course rating in question, available from the golf professional at that club.

### SAMPLE SCORECARD

Shown on the facing page is a typical scorecard, with the hole numbers designated along the left side of the card. The other identifications across the top of the card mean:

**BLUE MARKERS**—The tees and yardage of each hole used only by the professionals or very low handicap amateur golfers.

**WHITE MARKERS**—The tees and yardage of each hole used by the typical amateur weekend golfers.

**PAR**—This is the men's par: the score a male expert would be expected to make on a hole, including two putts on the green.

**STROKES**—These numbers represent the handicap, or "stroke," holes, listed in the order they would be given. Here, for instance, the first handicap stroke would be taken on the ninth hole. These holes are used in match play competition, when one player of lower handicap gives strokes to a player with a higher handicap. The order of each handicap hole is determined by the total strokes the average male course member would take on that particular hole in an average round.

**WON/LOST HOLES**—This column is used in match play competition to record who won or lost each hole.

**RED MARKERS**—The tees and yardage of each hole used by women amateur golfers.

**PAR**—This is the women's par: the score a female expert would be expected to make on a hole, including two putts on the green.

**STROKES**—These numbers identify the handicap holes for women.

Hole	Blue Markers	White Markers	Par	Strokes			W + L - Holes			Red Markers	Par	Strokes
1	380	347	4	13						332	4	11
2	418	385	4	7						370	4	9
3	378	370	4	3						330	4	5
4	250	190	3	15						145	3	15
5	507	472	5	5						410	5	3
6	431	393	4	9						379	5	7
7	406	372	4	11						361	4	13
8	207	182	3	17						145	3	17
9	580	542	5	1						474	5	1
Out	3557	3235	36							2946	37	
10	407	368	4	12						355	4	12
11	450	413	4	6						358	4	10
12	452	412	4	4						375	5	8
13	202	160	3	16						136	3	16
14	522	482	5	8						438	5	4
15	445	397	4	10						378	4	6
16	180	150	3	18						123	3	1
17	564	534	5	2						464	5	
18	400	360	4	14						306	4	1
In	3621	3261	36							2933	37	
Total	7178	6496	72							5879	74	
				Handicap								
Date				Net Score								

Scorer

Attested

PLEASE REPAIR BALL MARKS IMMEDIATELY UPON REACHING GREEN



## ETIQUETTE

Golf is traditionally a "gentleman's game," and there are certain courtesies that are universally respected by knowledgeable players. These are not difficult to master. They will become second nature to you after just a few rounds. However, you will not be a popular golfing companion if you fail to observe any of the following:

Be at the first tee, ready to play, at the agreed time.

Give all players, regardless of ability or sex, all courtesies.

If you are moving slowly or looking for a lost ball, invite the golfers behind you to play through.

Smooth out all of your club marks and footprints before leaving a bunker.

Park your golf cart (or car) to the side nearest the next tee. Don't pull a cart through a trap or over a green.

Replace all turf (divots).

Delay shooting until players in front of you are well out of range.

Be on the alert to shout "fore" should your ball be headed toward another player.

Don't scuff the green with your spikes or walk in another player's line of putting.

Do not speak or move when you are near another golfer who is about to play.

Do not stand in, or allow your shadow to fall in, a player's line of vision while he is shooting.

Leave the putting green promptly after holing out. Mark your scorecard at the next tee while others shoot.

## CHAPTER FOUR

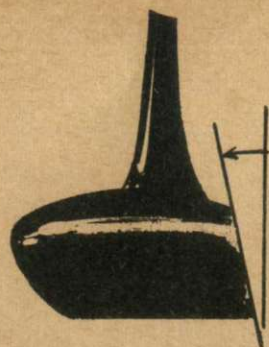
### *Selecting Your Equipment*

TO GET THE MOST SATISFACTION from golf, and to play to your maximum ability, you will eventually need a set of clubs especially fitted to your physical characteristics and your swing. The best wood clubs sell for about \$30 each; top iron clubs cost about \$20 each. The Rules of Golf allow you to carry up to 14 clubs, so obviously a full set of clubs can be a major investment.

However, as a beginner you would be unwise to purchase a full set of expensive clubs. Wait until your swing develops to the point where only minor changes in your technique are apt to occur. When your swing is this mature you can be fitted properly with clubs that will give you years of good service.

Until the time comes for you to buy high quality clubs, you might borrow a discarded set from a friend, or you may buy either a secondhand set or an inexpensive set of beginner's clubs. You can usually obtain the latter from the pro shop at any golf course or driving range. You will find that for the first season or two of golf you can get by with only two wood clubs—a driver (No. 1 wood) for tee shots and a 3- or 4-wood for fairway shots. Later you will want to buy a set of three or four wood clubs. Eventually you will want a set of probably eight irons—Nos. 2 through 9—plus a putter, a pitching wedge for short approach shots—especially from rough—and a sand wedge for bunker shots. During the early stages of your learning, however, a set that includes Nos. 3,





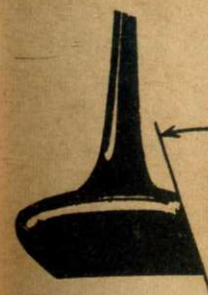
Driver



2-wood



3-wood



4-wood



5-wood



2-iron



3-iron



4-iron



5-iron



6-iron



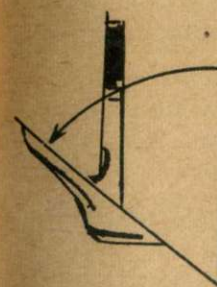
7-iron



8-iron



9-iron



Pitching Wedge



Sand Wedge

#### THE DIFFERENT CLUBS

A full set of 14 clubs consists of a putter (not illustrated, as they come in various shapes and sizes), a driver (No. 1 wood), two or three other woods, seven or eight irons, a pitching wedge, and a sand wedge.



5, 7, and 9, and a putter will suffice. This is usually considered to be the standard beginner's set. Actually it is good to learn how to make, say, a 5-iron also serve as a 6-iron. You will be forced to develop a wide variety of shots, much as did the great champions of the past, like Bobby Jones, Harry Vardon, and Walter Hagen, who carried fewer clubs than do the Jack Nicklauses and Arnold Palmers of today.

Along with clubs, you will need an ample supply of golf balls. Here again, you must decide how much you wish to spend. Remember that at first you will be cutting and losing more balls than in later years. Balls vary in price from about \$4 to \$15 per dozen. At first you will be wise to ask your golf professional or sporting goods dealer for balls that will resist damage from your early mis-hit shots. Today there are solid balls that are guaranteed cutproof.

You will need a bag for your clubs. If you think you'll be carrying your own clubs, choose a lightweight bag that won't weigh you down. If you are planning to use a caddie or a cart, or if you plan to travel with your clubs, get a sturdy bag that will last a long time, one that has a cover to put over the clubheads on trips and in the rain.

Pull carts are very popular on some courses. Selling for \$15 and up, they are a good investment for those who prefer not to take a caddie, and they will save you physical strain. Such carts are available for rent at most courses.

Golf shoes are practically a must. You cannot play well if you slip on the turf, and spiked shoes will help you maintain balance during your swing. They vary widely in price, from about \$15 to \$45.

A golf glove, while not essential, can aid your game. Most players find that it helps to provide a secure grip on the club, especially at the top of the backswing, where slippage is most likely to occur. Gloves also help to prevent the blistering that frequently plagues beginning golfers. Gloves cost from \$3 to \$5.

The choice of clothing for golf is up to you. You should wear apparel that fits comfortably and in no way restricts your swing. In warm weather, a short-sleeved shirt of a knitted fabric and slacks of light weave are standard for men.

Practically all courses allow Bermuda shorts, but few permit men to play without a shirt. Your socks should be thick enough to prevent blisters.

Most courses permit women to play in Bermuda shorts, slacks, or skirts combined with blouses or sweaters. Brief halter tops, short shorts, skimpy sunsuits, and the like are generally frowned upon.

If you go into a pro shop at a course or to a sporting goods store, you will see a number of gadgets for sale which are supposed to add to your comfort and/or your score. Whether they will or not can best be determined after you have played for a while, but a number of basic items should be added to your bag from the start:

A small hand towel fastened to the outside of the bag for wiping hands, face, and ball.

Insect repellent.

Suntan lotion.

A hat or cap to keep the sun out of your eyes and off your head on hot days.

A light windbreaker or plastic raincoat.

Now that you are all outfitted and have learned something about the game, it is time to get down to the heart of the matter—how to hit that little white ball from the tee to the green.



## Preparing to Swing

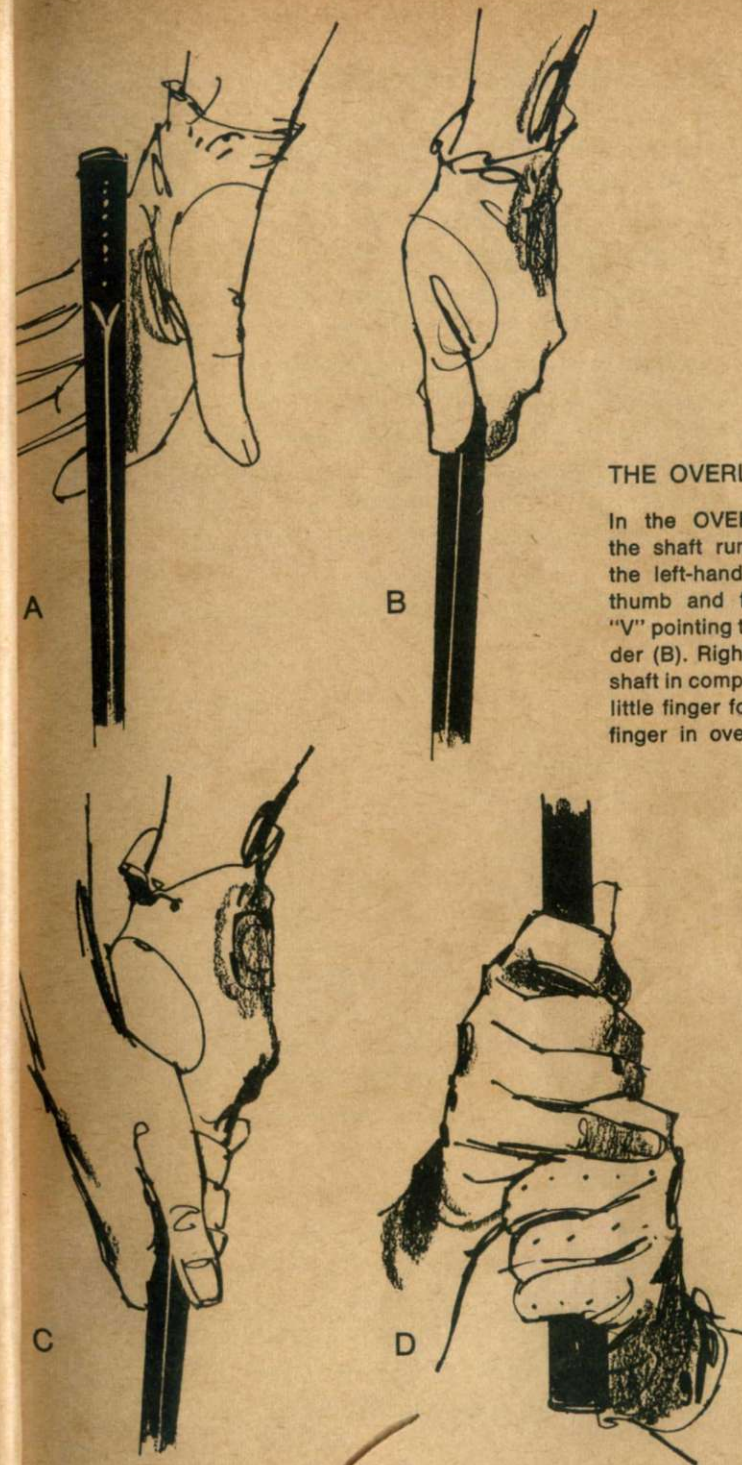
BEFORE ATTEMPTING to hit the ball, every beginning golfer must learn how to hold the club and how to stand up to, or "address," the ball.

Expert golfers, almost to the man, stress the importance of grip and address position as the two major factors in learning to play golf. Without a good grip and a proper address position it is highly unlikely that you will ever become an expert golfer, and mistakes made in the beginning will be quite difficult to correct later on, after they have become natural parts of your swing. At first, a proper grip and address position may feel uncomfortable—like a new pair of shoes—but with practice they will become almost second nature, and you'll be forever grateful that you learned them properly.

### THE GRIP

There are three types of grips used today. By far the most popular is the Vardon, or *overlapping*, grip used by well over 90 percent of the world's finest players. A few top players—Jack Nicklaus for one—use the *interlocking* grip, while the *ten-finger* grip—sometimes called the "baseball" grip—has a few advocates and has been gaining in popularity during the last decade.

These grips are similar in that the thumb of the highest hand (left hand, for right-handed players) on the club lies snugly in the palm of the lower hand. The three grips differ



### THE OVERLAPPING GRIP

In the OVERLAPPING GRIP, the shaft runs along roots of the left-hand fingers (A). Left thumb and forefinger form a "V" pointing toward right shoulder (B). Right thumb on top of shaft in complete grip (C). Right little finger folds over left forefinger in overlapping grip (D).



in how the upper hand's forefinger joins with the lower hand's little finger. In the overlapping grip, the little finger is off the club, since it laps over the forefinger. In the interlocking grip, neither finger is on the club, since they intertwine with each other. In the ten-finger grip, the two fingers do not combine at all—both are on the club.

Because the ten-finger grip puts all ten fingers on the clubshaft, it is most popular with junior players and women who feel they need maximum gripping power. The disadvantage of this grip is that it doesn't join the two hands together as closely as do the other grips. The interlocking grip combines the two hands most firmly, but has only eight fingers—counting the thumbs—on the club. The overlapping grip puts nine fingers on the club and suitably combines the hands.

Whichever grip you choose, there are certain fundamentals that you should follow:

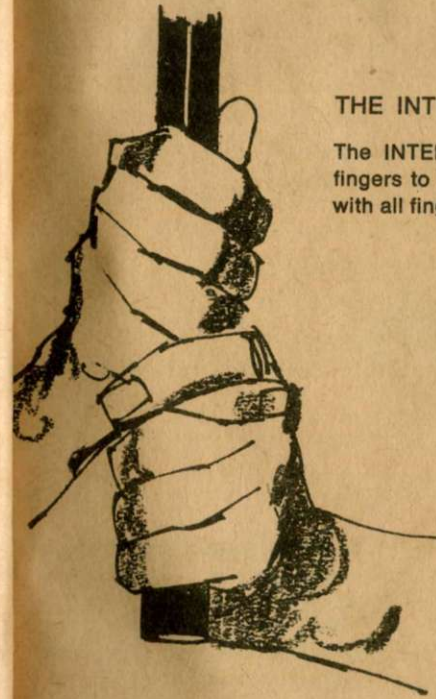
1. Your palms should more or less face each other so that the hands can work together as a unit during your swing. The V's formed by the thumb and forefinger of each hand should point more or less between your chin and right shoulder.

2. The two hands should fit snugly together for the best cohesion.

3. Your grip should be firm enough to avoid any slipping of the club during your swing. You will find that most pressure is needed in the last three fingers of your upper hand, especially at the top of your backswing. However, don't clench the club so tightly that your wrists cannot hinge and unhinge smoothly.

4. Hold the club more with your fingers than with your palms. Your fingers are more sensitive than your palms, and you will need this sensitivity in your shot-making. Beginning golfers who have played baseball must be especially careful to avoid a palm-dominated grip. The finger grip you might use to hold a Ping-Pong paddle is more akin to the golf grip than is the grip used to swing a baseball bat.

Study the illustrations and then practice gripping the club until it starts to feel natural. Stand in front of a mirror, close your eyes, grip the club, then open your eyes and check to see if your grip looks right. If you have doubts about your grip, show it to an expert player, preferably a teaching professional. Remember that a good grip will eventually produce consistent shots. And you need consistent shot-making to be a good player.

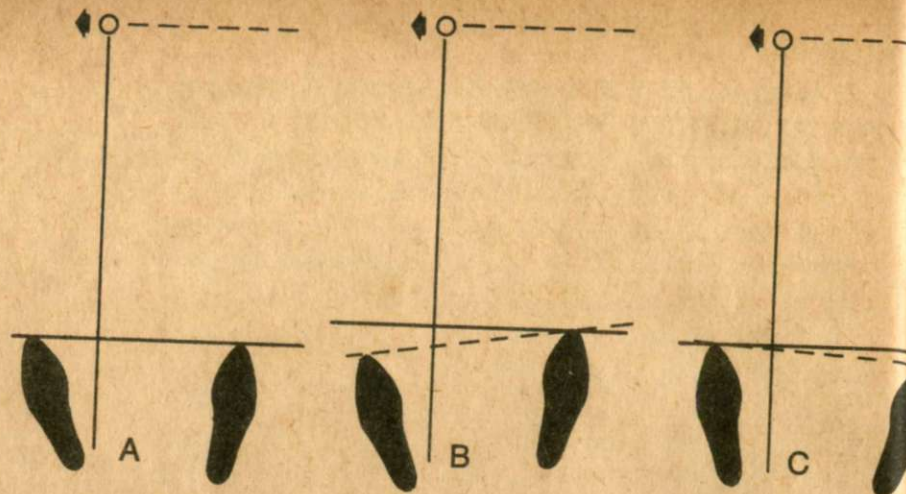


#### THE INTERLOCKING AND TEN-FINGER GRIPS

The INTERLOCKING GRIP (*left*) does not allow two of the fingers to be on the clubshaft. The TEN-FINGER GRIP (*right*), with all fingers on the shaft, is used by golfers with weak hands.







### STANCES FOR THE ADDRESS

**SQUARE (A):** both feet are equidistant from line through ball to target. **OPEN (B):** left foot is withdrawn from line through ball to target. **CLOSED (C):** right foot is withdrawn from line through ball to target.



### THE ADDRESS—SIDE VIEW

Arms hang naturally, knees relaxed, hands a little away from body, back fairly straight. The club is a driver.

## THE ADDRESS POSITION

You also will want someone to check your address position. Even leading professional players will periodically ask a fellow pro to check their posture or their alignment. It is surprisingly easy to misjudge the positioning of your feet and body and fall into a pattern of bad shot-making.

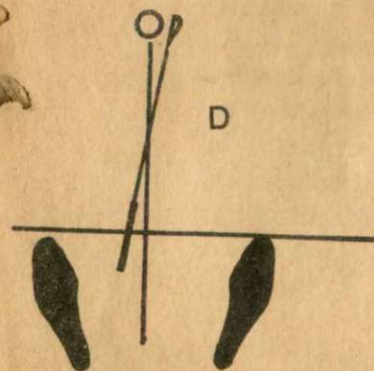
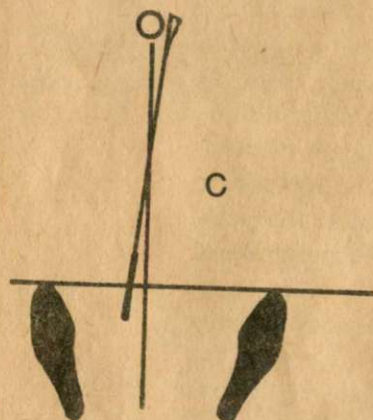
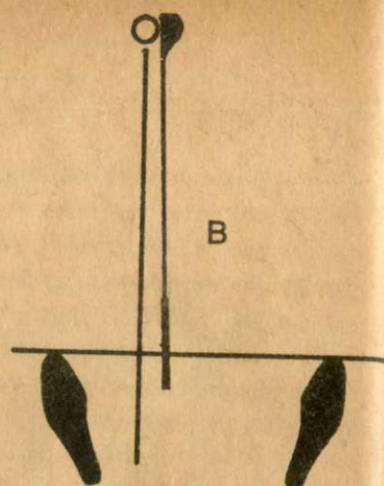
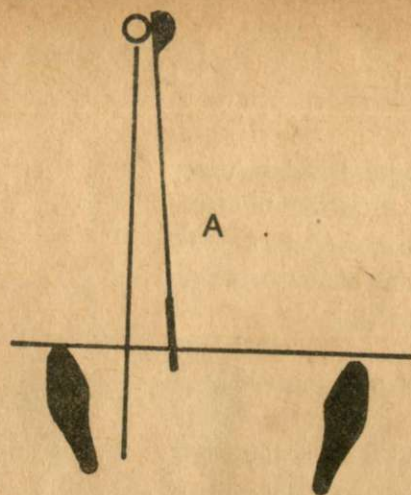
The address position involves positioning the body for proper alignment and for proper balance. Let's first look at positioning for proper alignment.

The object of proper alignment is to allow the clubhead to move toward the target in the hitting area of your swing. This will usually provide a straight shot. If the clubhead is moving off toward the right of the target, you may either hit the ball in that direction—a "push" shot—or you may put a right-to-left spin on the ball, which will cause it to "hook" to the left. If the clubhead is moving toward the left of the target, you will either "pull" the ball to the left or apply a left-to-right spin and "slice" it to the right. (It would be appropriate to note that all instructions herein are directed to the right-handed player; the left-handed player should simply reverse all the directions.)

The best way to assure that your clubhead will move toward the target is to stand up to the ball in the so-called "square" position, facing at right angles—"square" to the target line. You are perfectly "square" if imaginary lines drawn across your toes, through your hips, and across your shoulders are all parallel to the target line. With your body and feet thus aligned, it becomes relatively easy to move the clubhead along the target line in the hitting area.

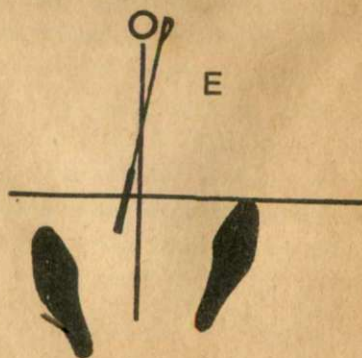
If you are a right-hander and you align yourself so that lines across your toes, hips, and shoulders point to the right of target, you have assumed a "closed" address position. This position is more likely to put a hook spin on the ball. The closed position makes it easier to execute a full turn on your backswing—because your right side is already "pre-turned"—but it makes body movement more difficult on the downswing and follow-through.





#### ADDRESS POSITIONS FOR DIFFERENT CLUBS

**DRIVER (A):** stance is widest; ball just opposite the left heel; hands slightly behind the ball. **FAIRWAY WOODS (B):** stance is square, hands over ball. **LONG IRONS (C):** stance is square but narrower, hands slightly ahead of ball. **MIDDLE IRONS (D):** stance is slightly open, hands ahead of ball, played almost in the center. **SHORT IRONS (E):** stance is narrow, very open, hands well ahead of ball centered between feet.



If the lines across the toes, hips, and shoulders point left of the target, you are in an "open" address position. Such a position encourages slicing shots to the right. It also restricts one's backswing while providing more freedom in turning on the downswing and follow-through.

Within the "square" address position, which we advocate for best alignment, there are elements of posture that you should adopt to provide maximum balance while swinging. Balance and alignment work together in the swing. You will recall that the goal of proper alignment is to provide a clubhead path toward the target. However, if you lose balance while swinging, you will thwart such a clubhead path.

For best balance while swinging:

1. Spread your feet so that from instep to instep they are about shoulder width apart. A stance that is too narrow may spoil your balance, while a too wide stance will restrict your body turn.

2. Play the ball opposite your left heel on full shots with the longer clubs, then gradually farther back toward stance-center as you use shorter clubs. Such positioning will allow the clubhead both to sweep the ball away on your long shots, and to strike downward on the ball—as it should—on your short shots.

3. Toe out your front foot slightly toward the target, to help "clear" your hips on your downswing.

4. Distribute your weight more or less equally between the balls and heels of your feet. Keep your weight off your toes. Your swing will naturally pull you toward the ball and you will lose balance if your weight is too far forward toward your toes.

5. Bend slightly at the knees, so you can turn smoothly and maintain good balance as you swing the club back and through.

6. Bend forward from the waist, but with your back fairly straight. Feel "tall" at address; avoid crouching with the back bent.



7. Hold your left arm extended, but not stiff. Along with the club it should form a more or less continuous line from the ball to your left shoulder. Your right arm should bend slightly at the elbow, ready to "fold" on the backswing.

8. Your left elbow should be slightly away from your body. Your right elbow should be in closer.

Practice the general address position—before a full-length mirror, if possible—until it feels comfortable. When it does you are ready for the next step—the swing.

## CHAPTER SIX

# Fundamentals of the Swing

THE PURPOSE of this chapter is to tell you what basic elements are necessary in your swing. Though golf is a game in which individual traits are highly noticeable—no two golfers look exactly alike while swinging—there are certain fundamentals common to all good swings.

Two misconceptions that seem to plague almost all beginning golfers should be corrected now.

The first is that the harder you swing at the ball, the farther it will travel. Nothing could be further from the truth. When you swing hard at the ball, you rely almost solely on the muscles of your arms. For maximum power and distance you must learn to use the larger muscles of your body—those in your legs and your back. Jack Nicklaus is probably the longest driver on the professional tour, because he does the best job of bringing into play the tremendous strength stored in his powerful legs and back. If Jack were to swing *hard*, relying largely on his arm muscles, he'd lose at least 50 yards on his drives.

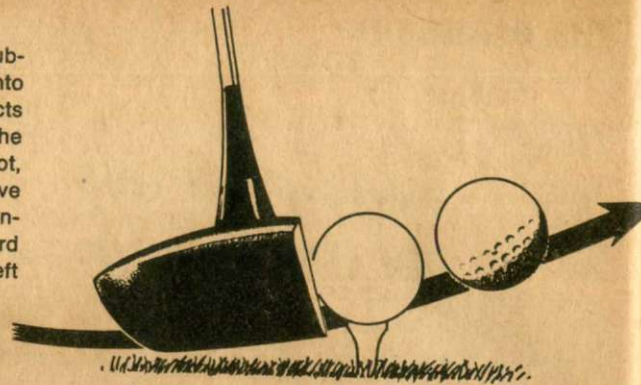
The secret of using the big muscles in your swing rests largely in achieving *proper timing* and *balance*. Swinging hard destroys timing and balance. The well timed, well balanced swing looks almost effortless. It never looks forced.

The second misconception we must eliminate for beginners is that they must lift, or scoop, the ball to get a shot airborne. You must never forget that all golf clubs, except some putters, are designed with slanted faces. This built-in



## LOFTING THE BALL

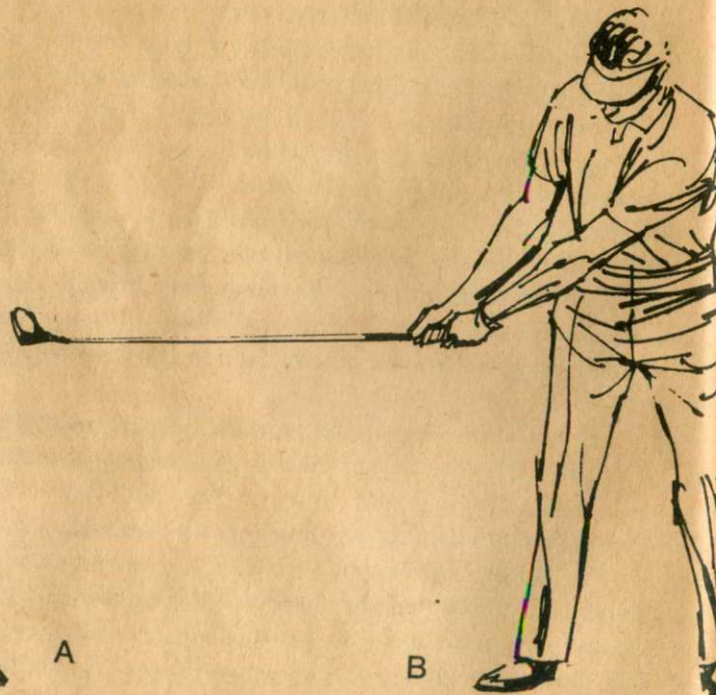
For the normal drive, the club-head should be just moving into its upward arc as it contacts the ball. This helps to put the desired height on the shot, since it increases the effective loft of the clubface. Such contact is improved by a forward positioning (toward the left foot) of the ball at address.



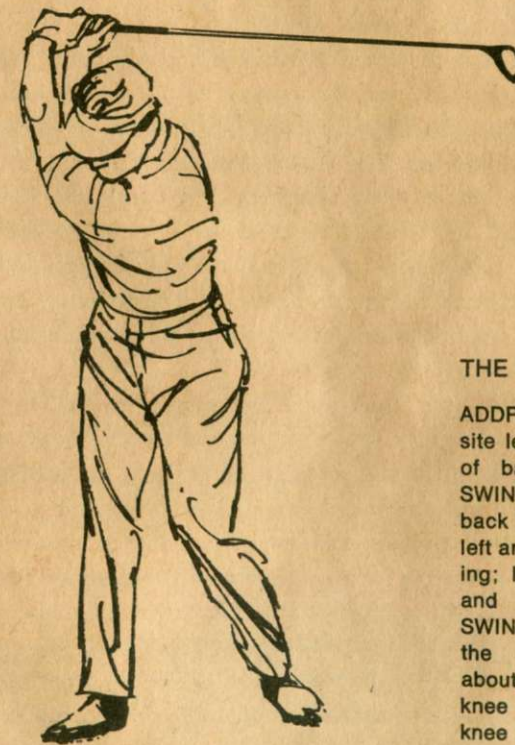
"loft" is quite enough to put your shots into the air without any special effort on your part. Trying to scoop shots into the air merely causes you to hit behind or on top of the ball.



A



B



C

## THE BACKSWING

The purpose of the backswing is to reach a position from which you can strike the ball straight and far. It's like pulling back the bowstring in archery; you stretch your muscles tightly on the backswing, so that they will release with force on the downswing. Your golf backswing must put you in a position that will not only release power but will also provide a relatively accurate shot.

Perhaps the easiest way to learn a proper backswing is to decide first exactly where you want it to take you. What position should you seek to reach at the top of your backswing?

To understand this position at the top, assume your proper grip and address position, bending at your knees and waist. Next, lift the club straight up as if you were going to

## THE BACKSWING

ADDRESS (A): play ball opposite left heel and look at back of ball. START OF BACKSWING (B): clubhead is swung back low to ground in wide arc, left arm straight, right arm folding; left shoulder turns down and under. TOP OF BACKSWING (C): hands are firm on the club; shoulders turned about 90°, hips about 45°; left knee points behind ball; right knee retains address angle.



sledgehammer the ball into the ground. Retain your flex at the knees and waist. Lift those hands high over your head.

Now, change this position of driving the ball downward to one you would assume to drive the ball forward toward the target. Turn your upper body so that your back faces the target. Your hands should shift to a position over your right shoulder and drop a little. Your left shoulder should point at the ball. Your left arm should be straight. It should also be in line with the back of your left hand—with no break at the back of the wrist. The hips should have turned naturally.

You are now in position to deliver a forceful blow to the ball. This is the way you should feel at the top of your backswing. Do your back muscles feel tight? Good! They should. So should the muscles of your left arm and side. They should feel stretched—just like a bowstring. Commit this position to your "muscle memory." Repeat the sledgehammer routine until the feeling of the top-of-the-swing position is firmly "set" in your muscle structure.

Now it should be simple to make your backswing the conventional way. Just swing the club back and up into the position you have "learned." Don't rush. Swing back slowly and smoothly. Feel that everything is moving as a unit. Your club, hands, arms, shoulders, hips and, yes, even your legs should be working together in a "package deal." Don't let your hands and arms take over. This would hinder the good timing and balance we seek. The backswing should be slow and smooth. Make a wide arc with your clubhead—the left arm remaining extended.

By now you should be developing the feel of a proper backswing. It's time to make a quick check. Go swing in the yard with the sun directly behind you, so that the shadow of your head covers the ball. Check to see that your head does not move "off the ball" as you swing. It should stay steady. This is very important, because the head provides the anchor that keeps you in balance. If it moves up or down or right or left, your clubhead will move out of line. (Many good players do rotate their heads slightly to their right—if they are right-handed—just prior to starting their swings, but the head position stays stable.)

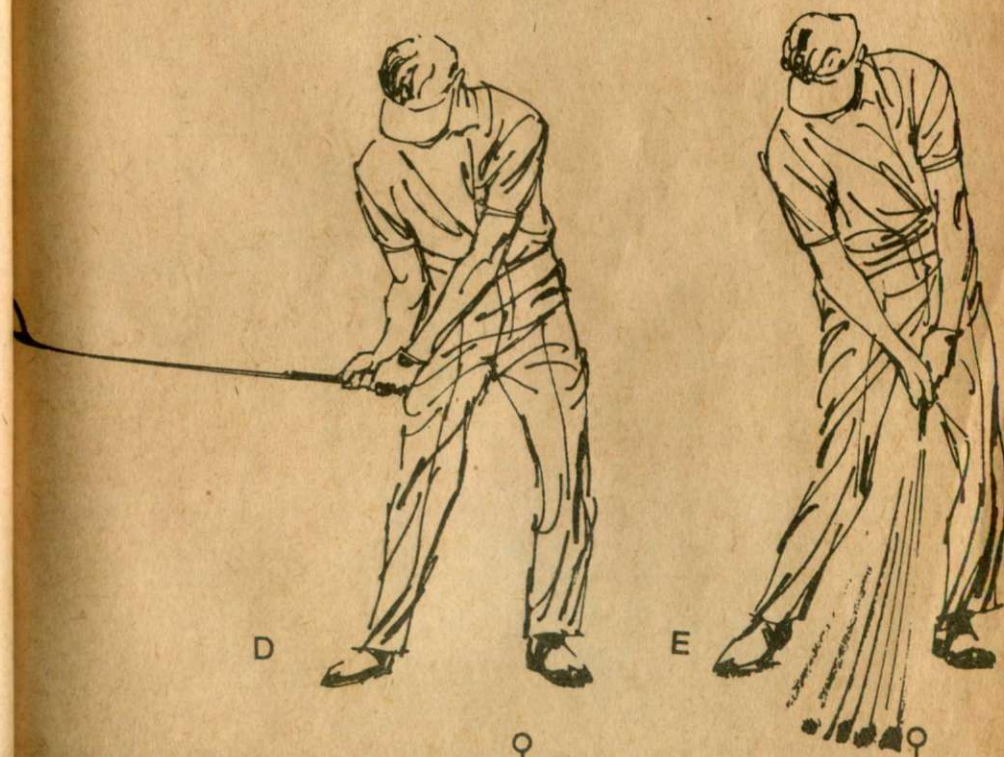
## THE DOWNSWING

The backswing puts the golfer and his club into position for the shot. If he reaches a good position at the top, his chances are excellent for making a good shot.

Once the downswing begins, the golfer has no more control over the path of the clubhead than the archer has over the flight of his arrow after it's been released. The clubhead moves so fast on the downswing that the human body does not have the strength to alter its course. It is vital, then, that the golfer start his downswing properly.

### THE DOWNSWING

DOWNSWING (D): left arm is still straight, right elbow against side; hips slide toward target, then begin to turn; right shoulder comes down and under. IMPACT (E): both arms are straight, right palm and back of left hand move directly toward target; right heel comes off the ground, but left foot remains solidly planted.





The downswing must begin with a quick shifting of weight onto the left foot. This is accomplished by lowering the left heel, which was lifted slightly on the backswing. Just as the left heel lowers, the legs begin moving to the left and the hips begin to turn in that direction. Then the shoulders begin their clockwise turning. Finally, the arms and hands begin to pull the club downward. *The clubhead is the last thing to move on the downswing.*

We have been quite specific about the order of movement on the downswing—heel, legs, hips, shoulders, arms, hands, club. These parts start to move almost simultaneously. However, unlike the backswing, which occurred as a package deal, the downswing involves a logical sequence of movement, with the lower body going first and the upper body, arms, and club following. This sequence of movement pro-

vides the *timing* you need to bring the big muscles into action—the timing you need to hit the ball far.

Remember to start your downswing with your lower body and not to swing hard with your arms. This will give you the timing your swing requires. Your weight will shift properly to your left side. Your left side will clear out of the way, leaving a path for your hands and arms. Your right shoulder will swing down and under as your left shoulder turns up and around. Finally, your hands and arms will come up and around to a nice high finish.

Again check your head; make certain that it doesn't move forward when your body and shoulders turn to the left on your downswing. At impact your head should still be in the same position it was in at address.

#### THE FOLLOW-THROUGH AND FINISH

FOLLOW-THROUGH (F): club-head is swung toward target as long as possible after impact; right shoulder turns under chin. FINISH (G): belt buckle faces target; hands are high over left shoulder, elbows comfortably close together. Good balance here indicates a good swing.





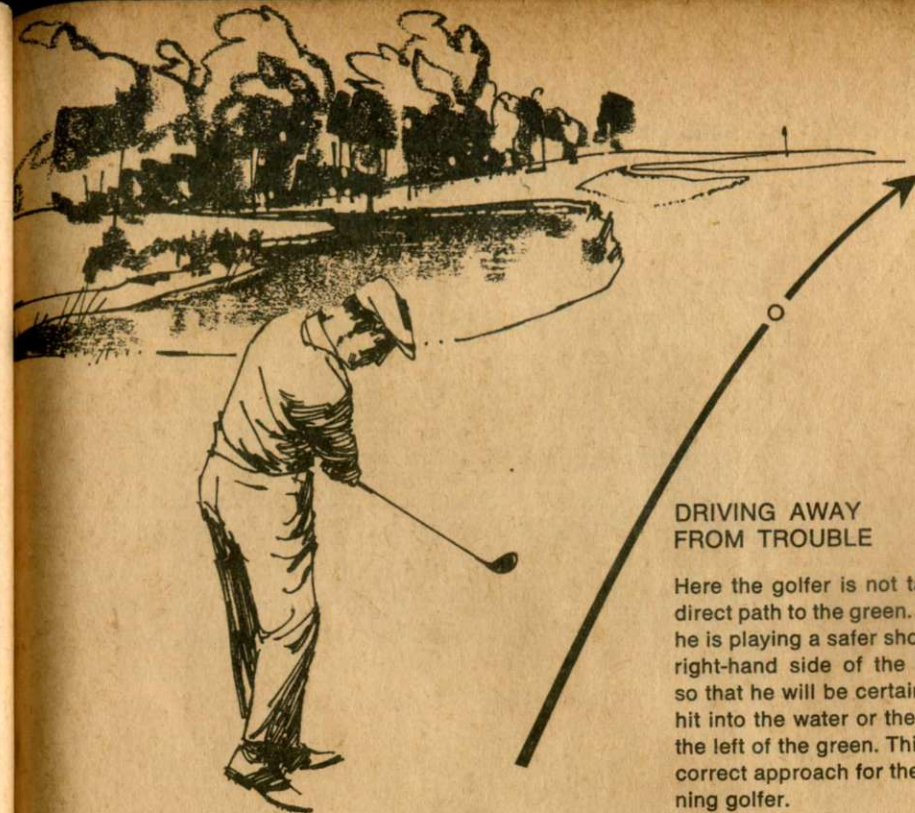
## From Tee to Green

NOW THAT YOU HAVE LEARNED the fundamentals of the swing, it is time to learn what clubs to use to move the ball from the tee to the green. As you already know, these clubs are divided into two broad classifications: woods and irons.

### DRIVER AND FAIRWAY WOODS

Quite probably the first shot you will execute on a golf course will be made with a driver, also called the No. 1 wood. This is the club that you will use for your tee shot on all holes except the shorter par-3 holes. You will probably hit the driver about 15 times in every round of golf you play, so it pays to become a close friend of this club—the longest in your bag and the least-lofted except for your putter.

The drive is the shot in golf that most emphasizes distance as opposed to accuracy. However, don't be misled into thinking that straight driving isn't important. Obviously it pays to keep all shots, including the drive, safely in the fairway. Less obviously, it is important to develop from the start a habit of driving for position as well as distance. On most holes the green "opens up" to a certain side of the fairway. If, for instance, the flagstick is on the right side of the green tucked behind a sand bunker, your best avenue of approach to avoid the bunker is from the left side of the fairway. You will want to position your drive to the left. Make it standard procedure to check the opening to the green before you drive.



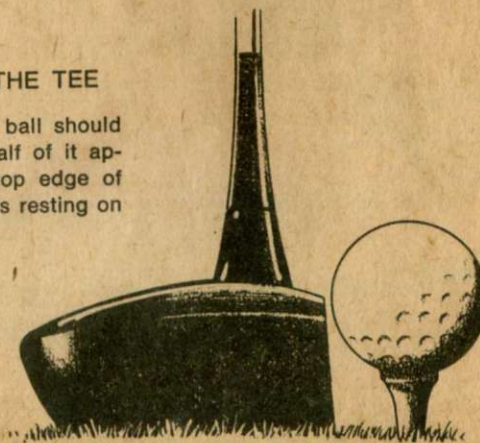
DRIVING AWAY  
FROM TROUBLE

Here the golfer is not taking a direct path to the green. Rather, he is playing a safer shot to the right-hand side of the fairway so that he will be certain not to hit into the water or the trap to the left of the green. This is the correct approach for the beginning golfer.

The ball is teed on a wooden peg for the drive. Merely place the ball on top of the tee and push the tee into the ground until about half of the ball appears above the top edge of the clubhead. Since the ball is teed, and since the driver has little loft, you will want to contact the ball just after you have reached the lowest part of your swing. Therefore, play the ball straight out from your left instep.

### THE BALL ON THE TEE

For the drive, the ball should be teed so that half of it appears above the top edge of the clubface as it is resting on the ground.



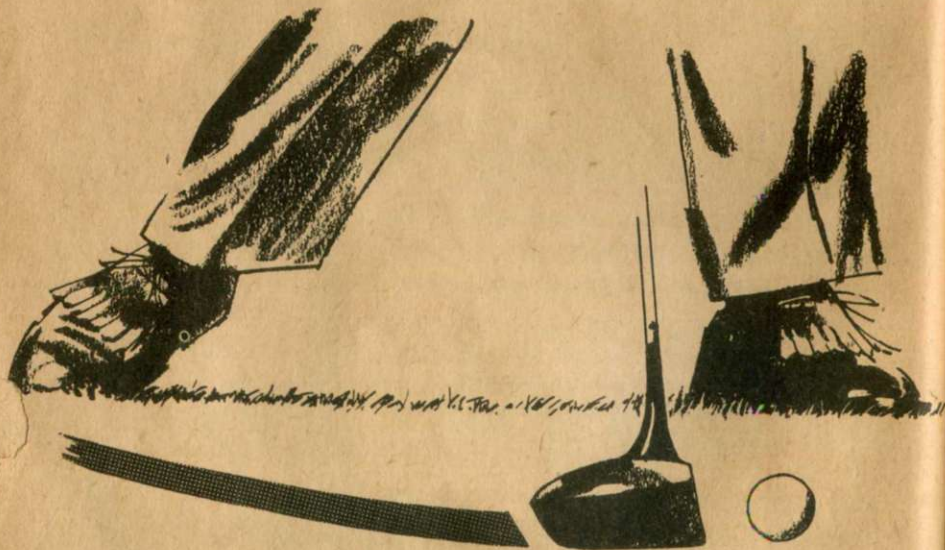


When driving, make as full a shoulder turn as possible, for maximum distance. Since the driver is the longest club, it will give you your longest swing. As on all shots, keep your head steady as you swing. Sweep the ball away. Don't try to lift it into the air.

The fairway woods include the wood clubs numbered 2, 3, 4, and 5. Most players carry only two fairway woods, however. To carry more would cut down on the number of other more vital clubs allowed under the 14-club limit. Few golfers carry the 2-wood, since its minimum loft requires that the ball be sitting up very high on the grass. The 3-wood, with its additional four degrees of loft, is better suited for shots from the fairway that require maximum distance. A 4-wood or 5-wood comes in handy for long fairway shots from "close," or "tight," lies or for long shots from fairly good lies in short rough.

#### FAIRWAY WOOD SHOT

For any shot from the fairway with a wood, the clubhead should sweep into the ball. The arc at impact is as nearly level as possible, and the clubhead should strike the ball at the bottom of the swing arc in order to lift the ball into the air.



The fairway wood shot differs from the drive only in that the ball is not teed. Again, the ball must be swept away, but on a fairway shot it should be contacted at the bottom of the swing—rather than just past the bottom. Therefore, play the ball just slightly farther back in your stance—opposite your left heel—on most wood shots from the fairway.

Because the ball is not teed, many golfers are hesitant about "staying down" on their fairway wood shots. They seem to fear that the clubhead will dig into the turf, so they raise up as they come into the ball. This causes mis-hit shots. As on the drives and all full shots, make certain that your right shoulder moves well down and under your downswing. Again, keep your head steady, because this is the best guarantee that you will strike the ball squarely. Often a beginning golfer is overly concerned with the flight of his ball and lifts his head too soon after hitting it. If you play without a caddy, ask your partner—whenever possible—to follow the flight of the ball. This will enable you to keep your head down and concentrate on hitting the ball squarely.

#### IRON SHOTS

The iron clubs are used primarily for accurate shot-making. Distance is seldom a consideration with these clubs. Many golfers take pride in achieving unusual distance with the irons. They brag about using, for example, an 8-iron for a shot that might be a 5-iron for most players. Never "press" for distance with an iron; use a less-lofted club and swing smoothly.

Most full sets of irons include Nos. 2 through 9 plus a pitching wedge and a sand wedge. As the irons increase in number they decrease in length. The 7-iron is shorter than the 5-iron, for instance. Thus the higher numbered clubs—8, 9, and wedges—are known as the "short irons." The "middle irons" are the 5, 6, and 7. The 2, 3, and 4 are the "long irons."

In hitting iron shots you will find that the shorter the club, the shorter you swing. This happens naturally because of the length of the club; you need not consciously shorten your swing. You will also find that you stand closer to the ball

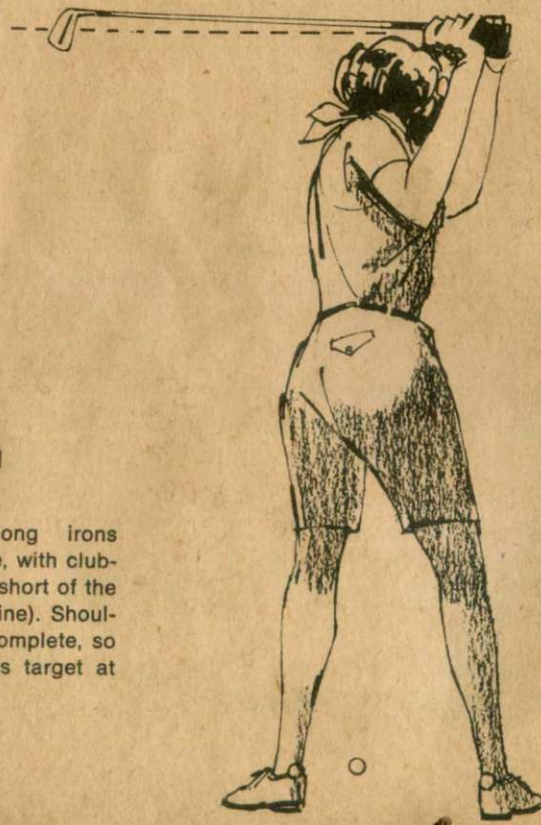


on short irons, again because of the shorter length of the club. This, too, happens naturally.

As the irons increase in number, they also increase in loft. You will hit your 7-iron shots higher than you will your 5-iron shots. Again, this happens because of the nature of your clubs.

**THE LONG IRONS.** These clubs, with their small faces and minimal lofts, require your best swing. Many golfers try to get maximum distance with these irons and, as a result, swing them with more force than is necessary. Often they uncock their wrists too early in the downswing, dissipating clubhead speed and the chances for square contact.

The tempo of your swing should be the same with these clubs as it is with all others. Swing as easily as you would with the shorter clubs, and you will soon experience the gratification that comes from striking a long-iron shot perfectly.



#### THE LONG-IRON SWING

Backswing for long irons should be complete, with clubhead stopping just short of the vertical (dotted line). Shoulder turn must be complete, so the back faces target at end of backswing.



#### THE SHORT-IRON STANCE

For short irons, the stance is open, and the ball is played in stance center.

For all iron shots the ball should be struck with a descending blow, as opposed to the sweeping motion used with the woods. The clubhead strikes the ball first, then cuts into the turf in front of the ball's original position. This downward strike is less apparent on the long irons than on the middle and short irons, which are played progressively farther back in your stance. With the long irons the divot is rather slight—maybe no more than a cutting of the grass in front of the ball's position. With the short irons the divot often is greater—a large chunk of sod will fly after the ball.

**MIDDLE AND SHORT IRONS.** Even if you don't hit the ball as far as some of your golfing companions, you can still beat them if you play these iron shots with greater accuracy. You will increase your control over the middle and short irons if you reduce your body action slightly. If you pull your for-



ward foot back slightly from a square into an open stance, you will cut down the amount of body turn you can make during your backswing—and increase your accuracy.

These shots will hit the green and stop quickly, as they should, if your wrists are *firm* when the club strikes the ball. Don't be sloppy and loose-wristed. Hit sharply down on the ball, with the back of your left hand pulling the club downward. Don't expect a very long follow-through on the short-iron shots.

Before continuing, it would be wise to pause and examine slicing and hooking, two problems which often plague the beginner.

## SLICING AND HOOKING

It is demoralizing to hit what feels like a good solid shot and then see it curve off-line to the right or left. This frequently happens to the beginner, and he is understandably confused. If you understand why shots are sliced to the right or hooked to the left, it will be easier to correct them.

**THE SLICE.** This shot curves to the right, and it is all too familiar to beginners. It not only takes the ball off-line, and usually into trouble; it also shortens shot length considerably.

Shots slice either because the ball was struck with the clubface looking to the right of target or because the clubface cut across the ball from outside to inside the target line. When these two faults are combined in the same shot the slice becomes pronounced.

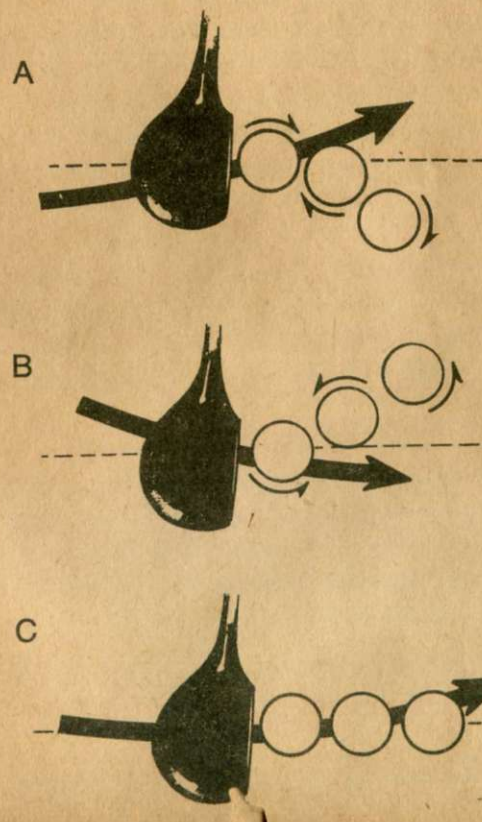
There are several swing errors that can cause sliced shots, but they all result in producing the clockwise spin that makes the ball curve to the right. If you are bothered by slicing, first check your grip. If your hands are turned too far to the left on the club, you will be more apt to slice. Make certain that the V's formed by your thumbs and forefingers point to the right of your chin.

Next, make certain that your stance is not open. The lines across your toes, hips, and shoulders should parallel the target line. If they point to the left of the target, you will prob-

ably be cutting across the ball and applying a slice spin. Many beginners aim to the left to offset their slicing tendencies. They merely aggravate the problem, because the "compensation" increases the slice spin on the ball. Many teachers tell golfers who slice to aim to the right of the target since this brings the player back to a square address position.

Another common cause of slicing is domination of the swing by the right side. Golfers who try to force shots by swinging hard tend to start their downswings with the hands instead of the lower body. The right side takes over and throws the clubhead too far outside, away from the player's body. The club then returns to the ball from the outside, and applies slice spin. The solution is to let the lower body and left side lead the downswing, with the hands following later.

**THE HOOK.** This shot curves to the left, and it too can be caused by the domination of the right side. If the left side collapses, the right hand may take over and turn the clubface



## SLICING AND HOOKING

The direction in which the clubhead is traveling at impact is a determining factor for the direction of the shot. When the clubhead moves into the ball from outside to inside the intended line (A), the ball will spin clockwise and slice to the right. When the clubhead moves from inside to outside the intended line (B), the ball will spin counterclockwise and hook to the left. To produce a straight shot, the desired result is for the clubhead to move slightly from inside the target line into the ball (C), then continue inside after impact.



so that it hooks to the left at impact. A firm left side and arm and good lower-body action will eliminate the problem.

Hooked shots are also caused by the opposite conditions from those that cause slicing. If your V's point too far to the right, your tendency will be to hook. Turn your hands more to the left as you assume your grip on the club.

Check your address position to see that you are not aligned to the right of target, in a closed address position. This will cause your club to move from inside to outside the target line in the hitting area, applying a counterclockwise hook spin to the ball. Again, the square stance and body alignment are best for straight shots.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### *The Art of Putting*

SHOTS ON THE GREEN are called putts. In putting, you stroke the shot with the one club in your bag that will not put the ball into the air—the putter. This club has little, if any, loft; thus it enables you to roll the ball toward the hole.

Each putt you take on a green counts as one stroke in your score for the hole. It may take you as many strokes to get the ball into the cup from only 20 feet as it did to move it several hundred yards down the fairway. You must recognize the importance of these small shots and practice them.

However, putting is one phase of golf in which you, as a beginner, can soon excel. Since it does not require a great many coordinated movements, extreme power, or years of experience, putting can be from the start your secret weapon in saving strokes.

All you need to become a good putter is to develop a sound stroke, and this can be accomplished quickly and easily during relatively short periods of practice time. The living room carpet is an excellent surface on which to practice such strokes.

The green is an extremely smooth area on the golf course. Everything is done for the golfer to make the ball roll as truly and smoothly as possible. However, the golf course architect will have built little ridges, gentle slopes and, in some instances, deep swales, to make putting more of a challenge. It is up to you to determine how these slants will affect the roll of your ball.



## PUTTING SPEED AND LINE

The first thing you should do before hitting a putt is to determine the path of the ball and the speed at which you want it to travel. There are no guidelines that will always help you determine the exact line of the putt; experience is the only real teacher of this aspect of putting. Take a good look from behind the ball to the hole before every putt.

When you putt, concentrate on striking the ball along the line you've decided on. Don't stand over the ball worrying about your decision, or you will likely talk yourself out of many putts you had planned correctly.

In deciding how hard to hit a putt, remember that the slower a ball is rolling, the more it will curve with the slant of the green. If you plan to hit the ball rather firmly, play for only a slight amount of "break."

### PUTTING SPEED AND LINE

**DOWNHILL-SIDEHILL PUTTS** (*top*) should be hit to roll rather slowly, so plan on a maximum amount of break. You should aim for a spot (X) on the line and putt over it.

**UPHILL PUTTS** (*bottom*) should be struck more firmly, so less break can be expected. You should aim for a spot (X) to the uphill side of the cup.



You should consider every putt of about 15 feet or less as makable. Be sure you get the ball up to the hole. Expert putters usually hit the ball just firmly enough to make it "die" at the cup, but not before. "Never up, never in," is a common saying about putting. Some experts recommend a stroke that will send the ball six inches past the hole if the putt misses.

On long putts—25 feet and over—your first goal should be to get the ball close enough for an easy second putt. Imagine that the hole is a circle three feet or so in diameter; then try to roll the ball into that circle.

Before hitting that first putt, always check the grass. If it is long or wet, plan to hit your putt a little harder than normal. On windy or hot days, greens will dry out quickly and play faster, especially if they are located on a hill. Putts against the grain ("grain" is the direction in which the grass lies) will roll more slowly; putts with the grain, more rapidly.

## STROKING THE BALL

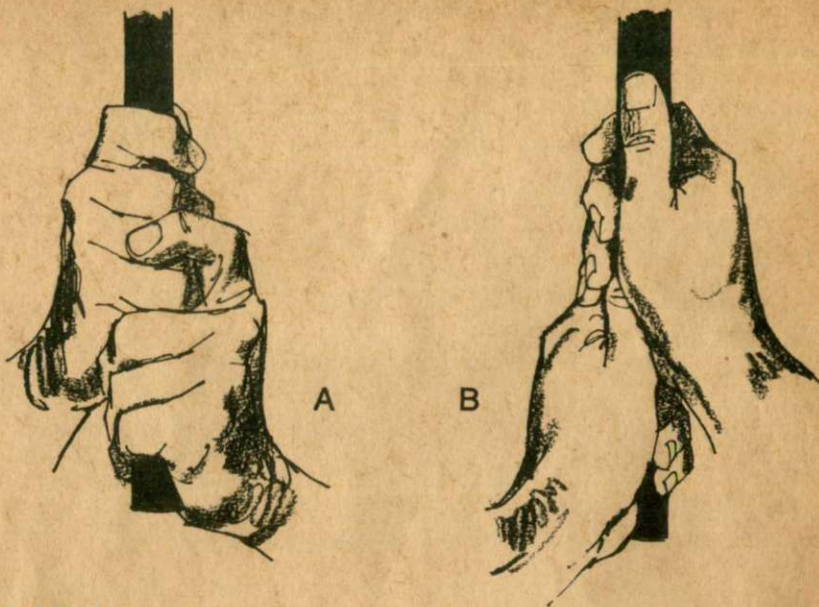
Probably the most important technical advice that can be given about putting is to putt whichever way seems the most comfortable for you. There are as many styles of putting as there are different styles of putters. Practice is the only way to determine which technique is best for you.

There are, however, certain similarities to be found in all good putters' methods. Fit these fundamentals into your own style.

First, since putting is accomplished almost solely with the hands and arms, keep your head and body as still as possible throughout your stroke. Any movement will almost certainly throw your putterhead off line. Second, in gripping it is generally agreed that the back of the left hand should face down the putting line. The thumbs should be placed on top of the shaft; the palms should be facing each other.

The most widely used putting grip among better players is the reverse overlap. The forefinger of the left hand overlaps the fourth finger of the right hand. Some golfers, however, separate their hands completely, or even place the right hand above the left in cross-handed fashion.





### PUTTING GRIPS

The most successful putting grip is a reverse overlap (A), in which forefinger of left hand is positioned over the backs of the fingers of the right hand.

No matter what putting grip is used, the thumbs should be placed exactly on top of the clubshaft (B). Grip with left hand is firmer than with right.

Like grips, stances also vary from golfer to golfer, but most players agree you should stand so that your eyes are directly over the ball. This way you can look from the ball to the hole without any severe twisting of the neck and without distorting your vision of the intended line.

The stroke itself may be a wrist movement, an arm-and-shoulder swing, or a combination of these two. No matter what stroke you use, the left hand should be firm on the club, to control direction. The right hand provides the power. The putterface, of course, must be exactly square to the intended line at the instant the ball is struck. Do not allow your left wrist to collapse before or during contact. Such a collapse will close the putterface and send the putt to the left.

One last point should be made here: don't ever lose confidence in your putting. No matter how much putting technique you develop, confidence that you are going to putt the ball into the hole is the most important ingredient for success. And don't believe anyone who tells you that good putters are born and not made. You'll never be a good putter if you don't practice.

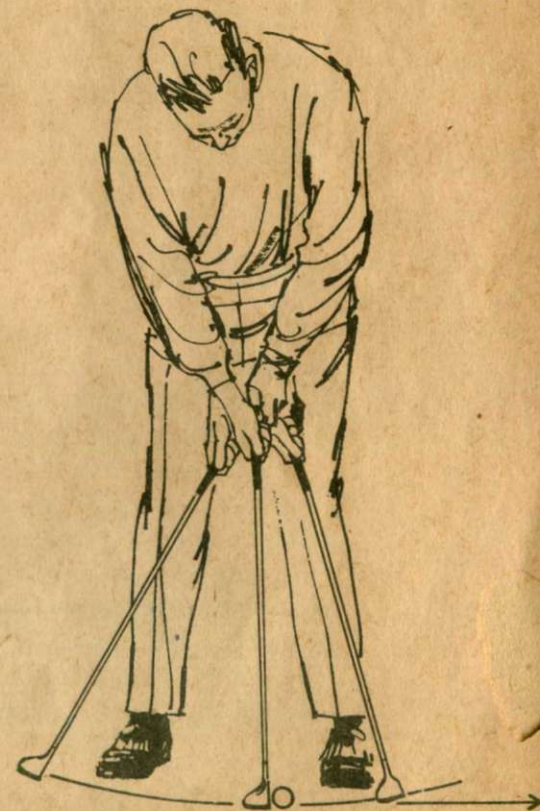


### THE PUTTING ADDRESS

Eyes should be directly over ball in putting stance. Ball should be played opposite left toes. This helps produce good rolling spin, which keeps ball on line.

### THE PUTTING STROKE

The body should remain as motionless as possible throughout stroke. No matter what style is used, the head must remain still until after impact. Clubhead should be swung back and through, very low to the ground. Right palm faces target at finish (except for the very longest putting strokes).





## Shot-Making Variations

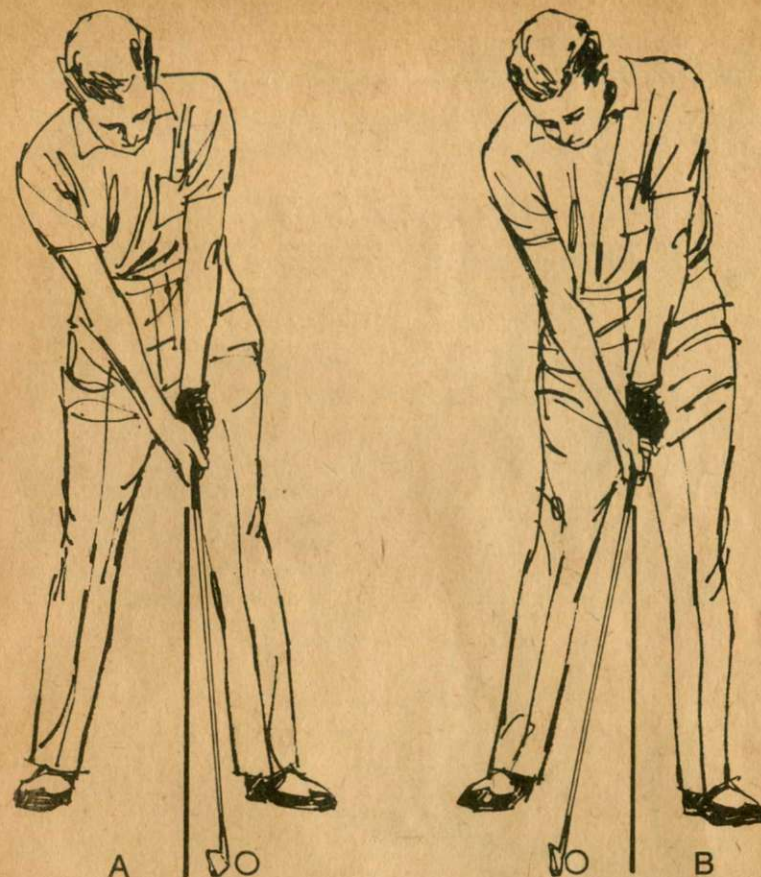
UNFORTUNATELY THERE IS much more to golf than driving down the middle of the fairway, hitting the next shot onto the green, and then two-putting for a par. Every golfer, particularly the beginner, can count on facing a number of unusual shot-making situations along the way. He will have to hit the ball in adverse weather conditions, from hilly lies, from rough and sand. While it may seem pessimistic to think of these situations before a round of golf, you should realize that no matter how well you play, you will face one or all of these shots sooner or later. Only by practicing them beforehand can you reduce the trouble they may cause you.

### WIND SHOTS

There are a few things you can do to take advantage of wind, or to minimize its adverse effects.

When the wind is blowing toward the target from your back, it is best to hit the ball a little higher than usual to gain added distance. To hit high shots, play the ball farther forward in your stance. Position your hands slightly behind the ball at address and put more weight on your right foot. All of this increases the effective loft of the clubface and will send the ball higher.

When the wind is blowing into your face, try to keep the ball as low as possible. Use a less-lofted club, a 6-iron instead of a 7-iron, for example. Play the ball well back in



### HITTING WITH AND AGAINST THE WIND

DOWNWIND (A): to get the ball in air, taking advantage of wind, play ball forward—near left heel—with hands behind clubhead (note vertical line).

INTO THE WIND (B): to keep the ball low so that it will bore through a headwind, play ball toward right foot, with hands ahead of clubhead at address (note vertical line).

your stance, with the hands well forward at address. Put most of your weight on your left side.

When playing in a crosswind, merely aim to right or left of target and let the wind bring your shot in on-line. Don't try to slice or hook shots intentionally to offset the wind. Use the wind; don't let it use you.





UPHILL: play ball toward left (uphill) half of stance. Swing back very low to ground and move clubhead into the ball on an uphill, or upward, path. Aim to right of target.

## HILLY LIES

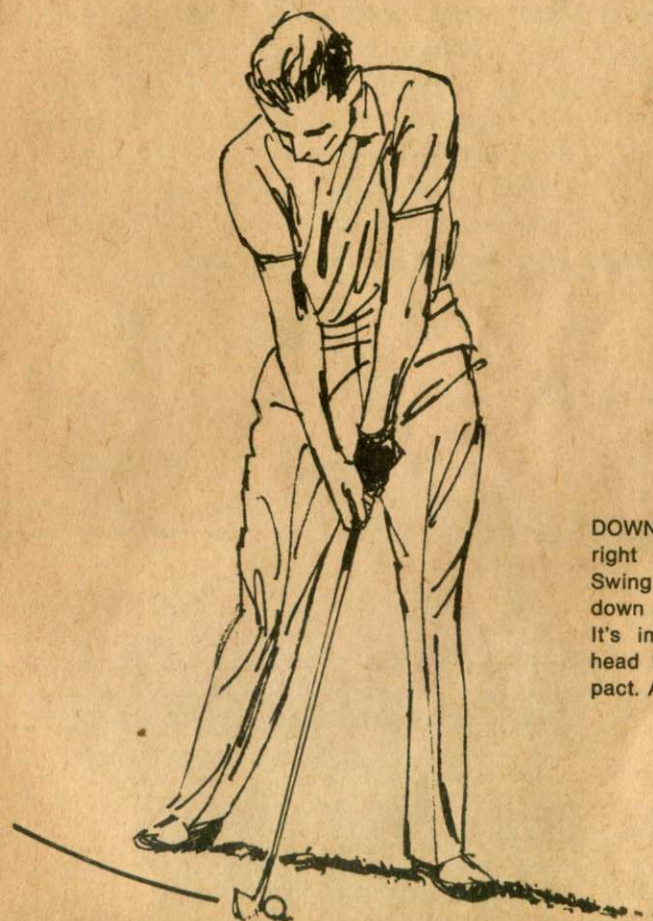
Hilly lies cause most golfers a great deal of frustration. First, there is the difficulty in making solid contact. Even good golfers tend to fall off balance when swinging on a hill. Second, it is somewhat difficult to hit the ball straight from hilly lies. These problems can be counteracted, however, with a few minor adjustments.

On uphill shots play the ball slightly forward in your stance to make solid contact. This shot tends to fly to the left, so aim to the right of the target. It will also fly higher than normal, so use a less-lofted club.

On downhill shots, reverse these procedures. Play the ball back farther in your stance, to contact it with a descending blow. Aim to the left of the target, bending the right knee to keep your hips level. Use a more-lofted club than normal to help get the ball up.

When the ball lies above your feet on the sidehill, you must shorten your grip, choking up on the club slightly. Keep your weight toward your toes so you won't fall away from the ball when you swing. Since this shot will normally pull, or hook, to the left, aim well to the right of the target.

If the ball is below your feet, put as much weight as possible on your heels so you can resist the tendency to fall forward during the swing. Grip the club at the top, bend your knees for balance, and aim to the left of the target.



DOWNHILL: play ball toward right (uphill) half of stance. Swing clubhead back and down along contour of ground. It's important to move clubhead low to ground after impact. Aim to left of target.



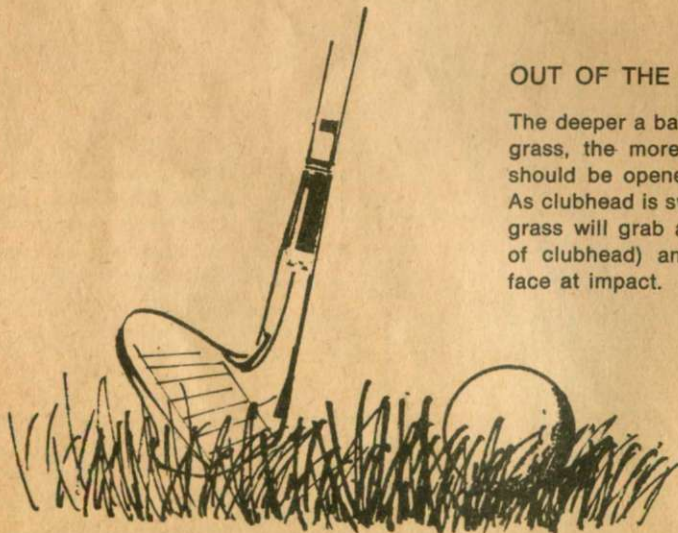
## SHOTS FROM THE ROUGH

The first thing to keep in mind when your ball finishes in rough grass is to get the ball back onto the fairway in one shot. Often you cannot expect to reach the green, so play a more-lofted club and settle for just gaining position to reach the green on your next shot. In most kinds of rough, beginners should avoid using a wood club. The heavy grass is liable to grasp the thicker wood head and prevent your hitting the ball with much force.

When the ball is in even, light rough, open the clubface at address so that it is aimed to the right of target. The grass will grab the heel of the clubhead and close the face as you swing into the ball.

Usually in rough it is best to employ a more upright backswing than normal and hit more sharply down on the ball, reducing the amount of grass that can get between the club and the ball. The grass slows the club's velocity.

Above all, never try to swing harder than normal when in rough, even though it may seem that more power than usual is necessary to extract the ball. Swinging too hard only throws off your timing, reduces your clubhead's speed, and minimizes your chances for square contact.



### OUT OF THE ROUGH

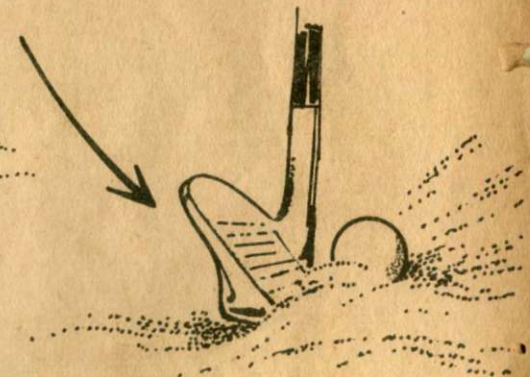
The deeper a ball lies in rough grass, the more the clubface should be opened at address. As clubhead is swung into ball, grass will grab at hosel (base of clubhead) and square the face at impact.



### OUT OF SAND

Play ball forward from sand, off left toes, in open stance. Hands should be behind ball at address. Break wrists quickly on backswing (note angle), which should be upright but not necessarily very long.

Clubhead should enter sand about two inches behind ball. Clubhead never actually hits ball, which is forced upward by pressure. Clubhead sweeps under ball, taking a narrow cut of sand.



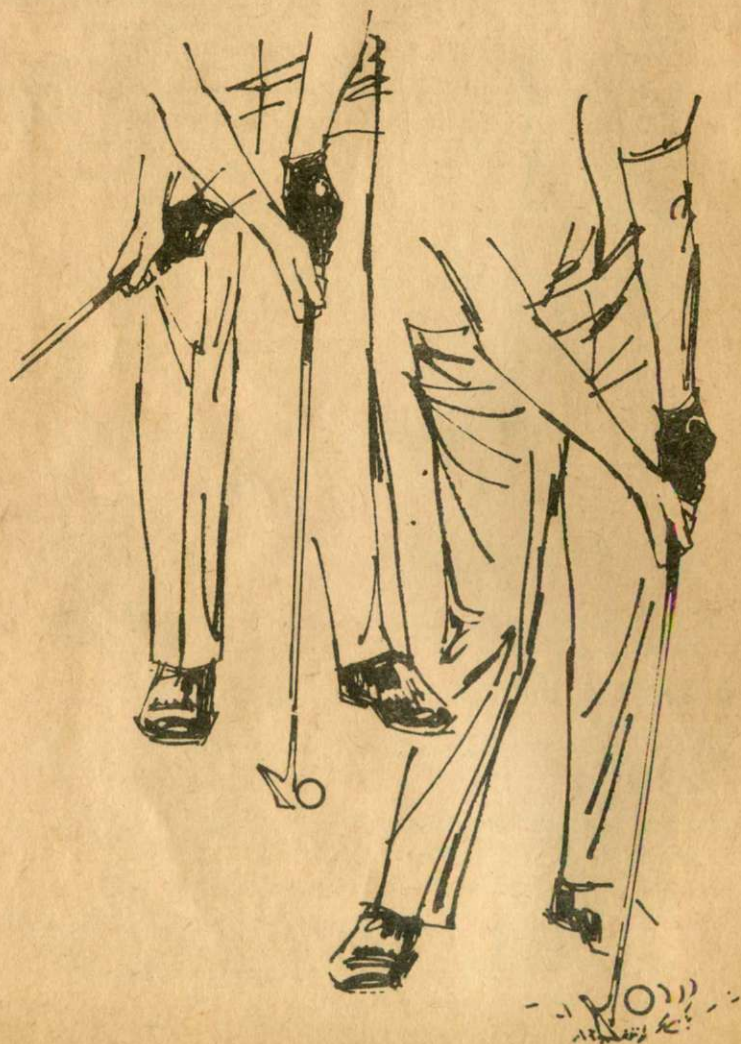
### SAND SHOTS

There is a club especially built for making shots out of sand—the sand wedge. If you buy one and use it properly you'll find that the sand shot is not nearly as difficult as you had imagined. This is the one stroke in golf where your club does not make contact with the ball. The objective is to drive



the clubhead into the sand, behind the ball, and use the moving sand to explode the ball out. The sand wedge is built to cut a shallow path through the heavy sand. It has the greatest degree of loft of any club in your bag, and it has the flattest and heaviest head of any of the irons.

On sand shots, dig your feet in well to provide a firm base, and position your hands slightly back to assure that your club will enter the sand about two inches behind the ball. Since this is primarily a hand-and-wrist shot, you should pick up the clubhead abruptly and swing it down the same way. Keep your head steady and make sure you maintain an accelerating swing through the sand.



## CHIPPING

Chip shots are made from grass close to the green. The idea is to land the ball just barely on the green, well short of the hole, and let it bounce and roll the rest of the way to the target.

The chip shot can be made with anything from a 2-iron to a wedge. Use the least-lofted club that will land your ball just over the edge of the green and still roll it to the hole. From a few feet off the green most players chip with a middle iron. As the shot becomes longer, or if there is little green between you and the hole, it becomes necessary to use a more-lofted club that will make the ball settle quickly after landing.

Many players find it helpful in judging distance to think of the chip shot as a long putt. Grip down on the club for maximum control and use a short, firm stroke—mostly with your hands and wrists. Let your hands pull, rather than push, the clubhead into the ball.

## CHIPPING ONTO GREEN

For chip shots, use hands and wrists almost exclusively, with little body action. Wrists should not break excessively, and after impact the right palm should face target. Use open stance and be sure hands are well ahead of ball at address and at impact.



## Using Your Head

SHORTLY AFTER YOU BEGIN playing golf you'll undoubtedly hear golfers complain that they would have had a good score if they had not made an eight or nine on a particular hole. You will avoid such high scores if you learn to manage your game and the course.

Playing within your capabilities is the key to scoring well. Just because you saw a big-hitting friend of yours make a 200-yard shot over a lake and onto the green is no reason for you to take the same dangerous route. He probably knew that in nine out of ten tries he could hit the shot successfully. The odds might not be that favorable in your case. It would be very unwise to risk a penalty shot.

Make sure that you know how much yardage you can expect from each of your clubs and then assess each shot in terms of your ability to put the ball where you want it to go. Remember, the winner is seldom the player who makes the most spectacular shots, but rather the one who makes the fewest mistakes.

Let's look at some more specific examples of how to conserve strokes.

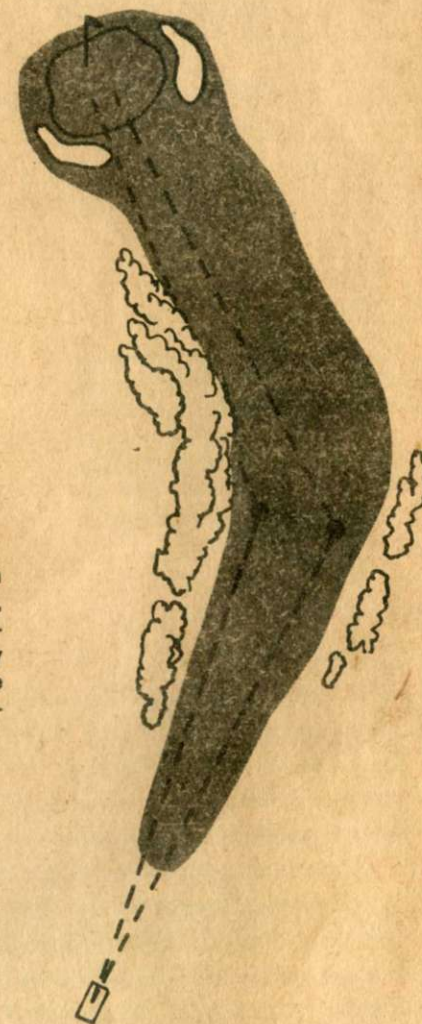
On "dogleg" holes that bend to the left or right, don't aim your tee shot too close to the bend in the fairway. Give yourself some margin for error so that even if your drive is short or off-line you will be able to see the green on your next shot. Try also to hit your drive to a position from which you can play your second shot to the green without having

to go over a hazard. When there is trouble on the fairway, tee your ball on that "trouble side" of the tee in order to hit away from the problem area.

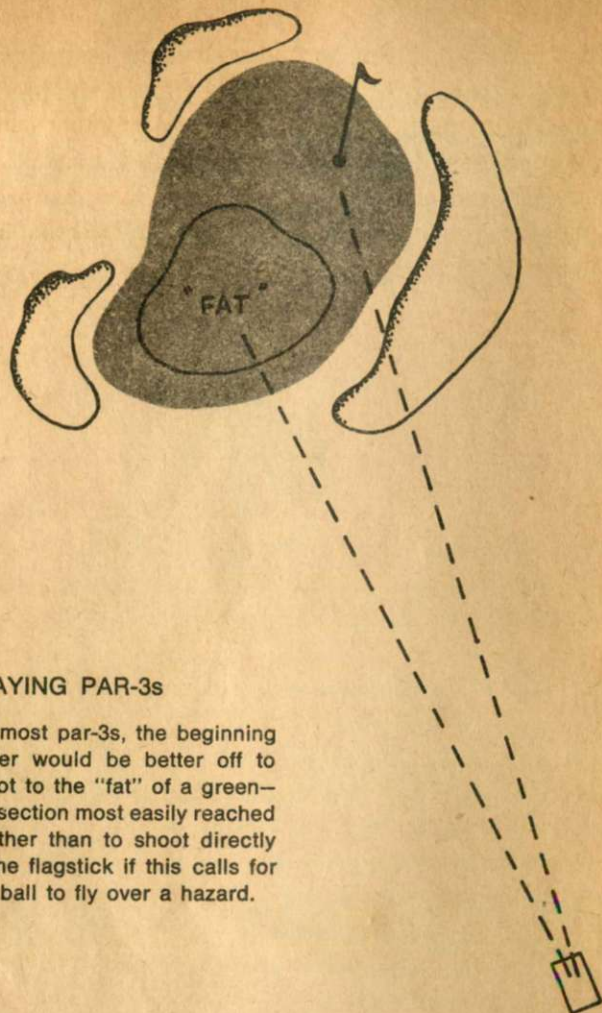
On all approach shots avoid hitting straight at the flagstick if missing the shot will mean landing in a hazard or other deep trouble. For example, if the pin is tucked behind a trap on the left side of the green, aim to the right for the "fat"

### PLAYING DOGLEGS

Proper strategy will pay off on a dogleg hole. In this drawing, note that drives of nearly identical lengths can result in vastly different second shots. The moral is, don't try to cut a dogleg corner too closely.







#### PLAYING PAR-3s

On most par-3s, the beginning golfer would be better off to shoot to the "fat" of a green—the section most easily reached—rather than to shoot directly at the flagstick if this calls for the ball to fly over a hazard.

of the putting surface. Then, if you hit your shot short of the green, there is still a chance that it may roll on. You may not finish too close to the flagstick, but you will be in position on the green for an easy two-putt, rather than landing in the hazard and scoring a possible double bogey or worse.

Good strategy is very important on long par-5 holes. The tendency here is to try to hit the ball too far. Figure that three 180-yard shots add up to 540 yards, which should be enough to reach the green on most long holes. The key here is to swing "within yourself."

To a great degree your mental outlook determines your success in golf. No one can hit a good shot if he is still fuming over a previous error. The good golfer forgets about a bad shot, because he realizes that anger can cause him to lose concentration and mis-hit ensuing shots. One bad shot shouldn't cause you to make others. Forget that bad shot and make the next shot as good as you can.



## *The 19th Hole*

WE HOPE that the instructions in this book have put you on the right track to learning and enjoying golf. As is true in any sport, you can't learn everything about golf by reading a book. Only by studying the basic fundamentals and then putting them into practice can you decide which elements of the instructions apply most directly to you, and how you can implement them.

Golf should be kept in proper perspective. The most important tip anyone can give you at this stage is to HAVE FUN. Following some of these instructions will come easily to you; others will take more practice. Enjoy the thrill of your good shots, and, above all, don't become discouraged by a bad shot or a poor round. Stick with the game, and before you know it you will have developed skill that will give you thousands of hours of relaxed enjoyment.



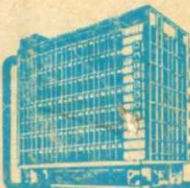


### LEARN TO PLAY GOLF

Designed for the adult beginning player, this is a complete how to guide for men and women. Instructions follow the logical step-by-step sequence used by professional instructors at golf courses and country clubs throughout the nation.

Early chapters acquaint the reader with golf terminology, and the conduct of the game, followed by advice on the selection of equipment. Then, in fully illustrated chapters, the beginner is taught the correct grip, how to address the ball, and the mechanics of the swing itself. Next comes detailed instruction on how to use each club, how to putt effectively, and how to save strokes with specialty shots. The book concludes with tips on how to keep your score low through strategy and by using your head on each shot.

For the adult who has never—or hardly ever—stepped onto that first tee, there is no finer beginner's guide.



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